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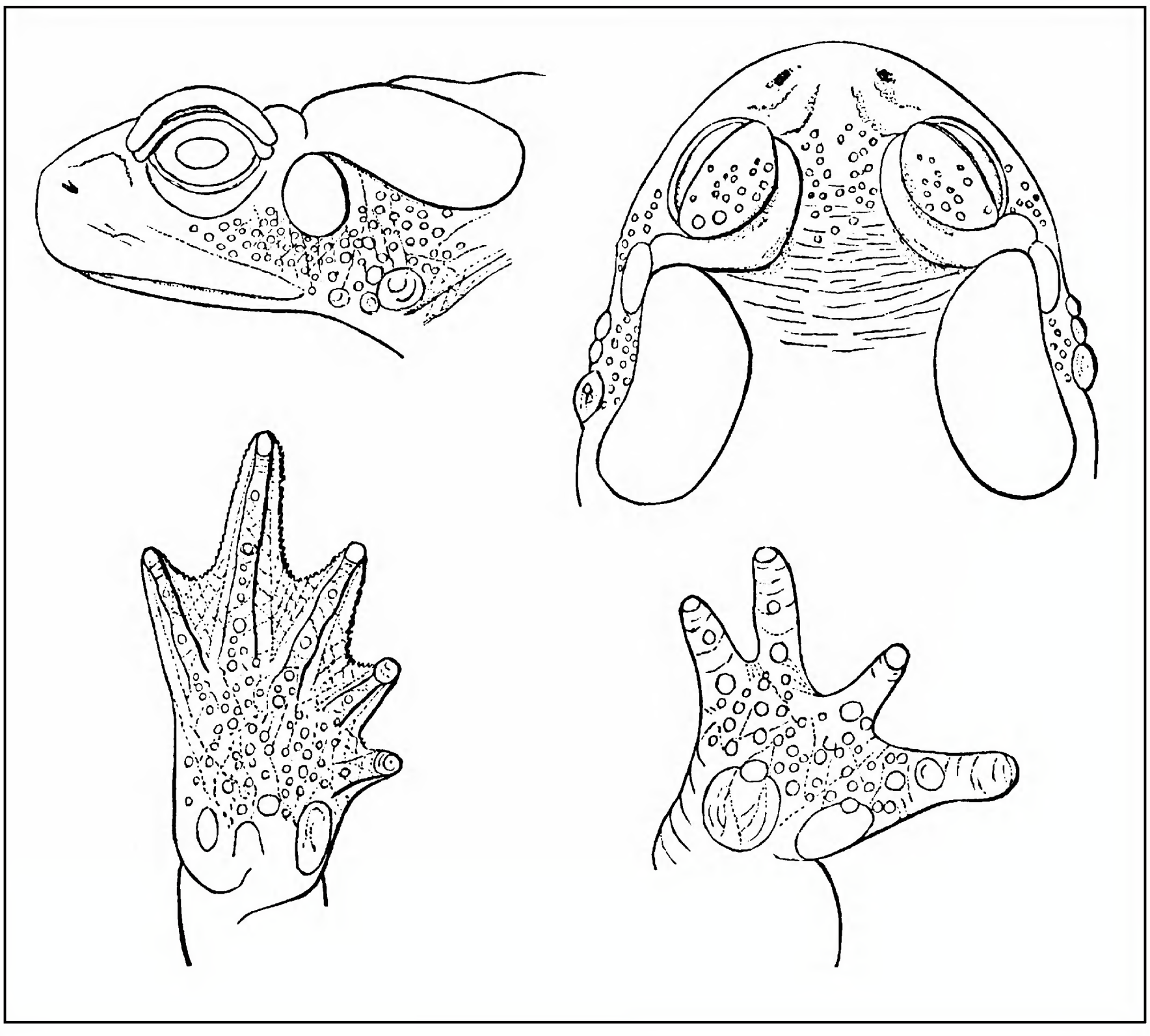

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To the Parents of a Young Herpetologist

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It was mid-day during the summer vacation of my thirteenth year when the doorbell to our New Jersey house rang. I answered the door, followed closely by my cousin, who was visiting from New York, to find a huge policeman holding a pillow case at arm's length in front of him. He may have squinted at me from behind his Ray-Bans, but I couldn't tell . . . all I saw was a uniform, gun, badge, and a coffee can.

"Uh, you Sprackland?" he asked carefully. I nodded, and he paused. "You sure? The commissioner said you were a snake expert?"

He had my interest, but my cousin took a step backward from the door. She didn't like snakes, and even the word "snake" made her cringe.

"What kind of snake?" I asked, suddenly very interested in what was *inside* that coffee can.

"I dunno," the officer answered, still not quite sure he should trust me. "Some three-year-old was in his backyard and got bitten by this snake. His folks put it in here with a hoe, and rushed him to the hospital. If it's a rattler, they need to start giving him antivenom."

The officer thrust the can towards me, and I took it and carefully peered inside. I saw nothing. I held the can under a better light, finally seeing the tiny form of a young hognose snake at the bottom.

"They don't want to give the stuff to the kid unless they're sure," the cop continued, referring to the impending antivenom treatment. "It can be pretty bad if it's not really needed."

"It's okay," I said. "Just a harmless hognose snake."

"Are you sure?"

I reached into the bag and withdrew the snake before the policeman could react; my cousin almost fainted (to this day, she remains ophidiophobic). "Yeah, I'm sure. May I keep the snake?"

The officer radioed the hospital, and a nonissue was resolved. That night, my cousin recounted the story—with a few sordid details I didn't recall—to my mother. Mom sighed, I expect, with the expectancy that my lifelong interest had just matured into a new phase. She never liked snakes, and was saddened, I think, when my natural history interests turned from dinosaurs, fishes, and insects firmly into the camp of living reptiles. To her credit, she drew the lines at a very few restrictions (no bats, anteaters, or venomous animals and NO animals at the dinner table), and endured only a very few later incidents of policemen bearing serpentine gifts. Only the last specimen I examined for the Jackson Police Department, when I was 17, actually was a rattlesnake. My dad was the police commissioner, and routinely had officers bring snakes for identification. The initial disappointment of the officers that day ("No, I don't want the rattlesnake," I told them) quickly turned to joy when I suggested they take it to Staten Island Zoo, via a particularly nice Italian restaurant on the way home—in essence, a day "off." Not wishing to argue with the commissioner's son, the officers duly took the snake and drove north.

If you are the parent of a young reptile enthusiast, you may have fallen into a hobby without ever having been prepared. Young naturalists bring home the darndest things (like a pocket full of dead baby bullhead catfish I found at the Raritan River when I was 8), and parents must either adapt or go nuts. If you are not an enthusiast yourself, you may feel particularly isolated, for newsletters and magazines are largely for the "converted." I am sharing some of my youth so you may be a little better prepared for what's in store. Of course, as you already know if you've learned enough to have joined this society, no herpetoculturist is "typical."

My interest began from the baby carriage, when introduced to *Tyrannosaurus rex* for the first time at the age of two. My grandfather had worked at the American Museum of Natural History since 1927, becoming head of the guards until his retirement. My aunt also went to work there, starting just two weeks before I was born, going on to head Guest Services until her retirement. My mother would often drive into Manhattan to pick them up at night, and if we were early enough, we got to explore some of the huge galleries. On one occasion we were particularly early, so we went to the fourth floor to see the dinosaurs. The rest, as they say, is history.

Dinosaurs are a safe interest, from a parental position. The kid, after all, isn't likely to have a *Diplodocus* follow him home, and there are no live pets one must feed or clean up after. For me, the switch to living reptiles came when I was four, and my aunt had bought me a gift. Thinking it was a dinosaur book, she actually brought home the classic Zim book on reptiles and amphibians. I noted frequent use of verbs in the present tense, and my interest shifted virtually overnight. Soon our apartment became home to baby turtles, tadpoles, and my first frog. The frog, as it so happened, was mom's first trial.

We had gone for a vacation trip to Kingston, New York, where I was fascinated by the abundance of insects, small mammals, and frogs, not to mention trees, lakes, and mountains that were new to a city boy. One day I was exploring the lakeshore with my father and an acquaintance he'd met fishing, when we found and captured a small green frog. Housed temporarily in a bottle, it was essential to bring him to the city

for further study. Of course, it escaped, and eluded all efforts to find it again. That is, until a few months later when my mother was repotting her plants. Out of one pot jumped our frog, alive and, apparently, still well!

The collection of further specimens was very limited while we lived in New York and, later, a New Jersey housing development, so my interests were primarily centered around the study of exhibits, collections, and the library of the American Museum of Natural History. During these years I was very fortunate to spend time learning about a broad range of zoological and palaeontological subjects, talking with scientists whose names are legendary in their fields, and otherwise quite happily compensating for my lack of field experience. To this day, I remain extremely grateful to Charles Bogert, Charles Cole, Herndon Dowling, George Foley, Samuel McDowell, Charles Myers, Russell Rak, and Richard Zweifel.

But when I turned 15, we moved to the country. Imagine my mother's great delight the day my "expedition" returned home with a huge, live, snapping turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*). I had been collecting frogs in a tiny pond a few hundred yards from our house, an activity I pursued almost daily. While wading around, I stepped on a large rock where, I belatedly recalled, no large rock had been before. Retracing my steps, I found the rock was gone. I hollered at a friend to stay "on guard" while I got help. My surprised dad was dragged into the hunt, along with two or three neighbors who happened to be drawn by the excitement. Using some fish as bait, we eventually lured this local Leviathan close enough to the bank for us to get it out of the water (though in such a confused manner, I shudder to think back about *how* we must have accomplished this feat). Following the handling instructions provided in Conant's *Field Guide*, we carefully escorted the turtle home. Retelling the tale of its capture to my mother, I was wise enough to omit the part about my having discovered the snapper by stepping on it. Soaked, exhausted, and triumphant, we deposited the turtle in a large wood and chicken-wire cage in the backyard—one once used to house our large puppy. Imagine our surprise the next day to find that the turtle had climbed out and escaped off into the woods. Imagine, further, mother's joy that it had escaped outside.

Despite poor local collecting, I had made contacts through many pet shops and mail order dealers, so my need for "lab space" was both real and growing. Basement quarters were quickly cramped, so I had been given a large, enclosed porch at the back of our house, where the collections—fish, amphibians, reptiles, and crustaceans, dead and alive—were kept. Well, usually, that is. Snakes are, after all, legendary escape artists, so we did have a few . . . incidents. Little things, like that same cousin I mentioned earlier finding a pair of water snakes (*Nerodia sipedon*) coiled in the laundry basket. Or the snail-eating snake that somehow found itself coiled around the doorknob just when mom was planning to use that same knob to open the door to leave the house. This lab area was adjacent to the kitchen for which reason, I remain convinced, my mother's cooking took on a more powerfully aromatic and spicy nature. Only a swinging half-door separated the two rooms, and we were fortunate in having no unpleasant incidents between mom and the reptiles, though I averted a near-disaster when I discovered the boa coming over that door one day. Fortunately, Mom was still at work. Snakes, it seemed, were chock-full of potential learning experiences for a young herpetologist.

Parents may also be advised that the downside, from the youngster's point of view, is the obsessive nature of herpetology as a hobby. In other words, it is often easy to bribe a young herpetologist. My grades went up noticeably in eighth grade after being offered the chance by my mother to buy an expensive new reptile book in exchange for my earning a "B" in history. I overcame my fear of water and learned to swim when my dad offered Boulenger's *Catalogue of the Lizards* as incentive.

It must have been hard on my parents to have an only son aspiring to become a herpetologist, because I was not only the first member of the family to go to college (and being the first member of the family in three generations to be leaving the New York–New Jersey area), I had chosen a college halfway across the United States from home. I imagined that my parents would be relieved ("we get two new rooms, and no more formaldehyde odors!"), though my dad assures me that mom was *not* ambivalent. We packed off most of my live reptiles as gifts to the Philadelphia Zoo, keeping only my three-foot tegu as a dormitory roommate, and I headed off to the University of Kansas, still one of the leading centers of herpetological science. It was there I met my wife, who, in continuing the tradition of encouragement of my parents, has helped me experience a wonderful and varied career that has taken me across the U.S., Europe, Australia and New Guinea.

When herpetologists publish books and papers, it is customary to acknowledge the help given by colleagues in museums, zoos and institutions. A few, such as the late James Oliver, dedicated books to parents. I hope that in this short paper I have demonstrated how important some parents can be in developing zoological interests. To my parents, the late Lucille and Joseph Smith, I have been and remain grateful for encouraging and supporting my lifelong interest in understanding the rarely-loved inhabitants of the animal world. If your child isn't destined to become a zoologist, the interest and its demands on your time and resources are still not wasted. An appreciation of nature and the aesthetic beauty of other creatures is sorely needed in an increasingly high-tech/low-touch society. I know many non-herpetologists who still hold a warm spot in their hearts for Pope, Conant, and Ditmars. Herpetology helped expand and diversify their interests, and in human society, as in nature, diversity is the fabric of life itself.

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Searching for Herps in Mexico in the 1930s — II

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Part Three—1934 with Dunkle

Memories of the 1932 trip to Mexico were so enticing that the urge to return eventually overcame good judgment. As a result, David Dunkle, then a graduate student at the University of Kansas, as was I, and I foolishly embarked on an ill-advised foray to collect herps in Mexico during the summer of 1934, using a 1923 model T Ford coupe that was far from equal to the task even though we spent $50 to condition the car—twice what it cost. That left us with $250 for our spree, necessitating a great deal of sponging on others en route, and cutting every possible corner with expenses.

We took the lid off the rear compartment of the car, which we called Daisy, and built in its place a large black box, its top nearly flush with the roof. The box opened from behind. It had no bottom, but opened below directly into the rear compartment of the car. On the left running board a wooden toolbox was built, making it impossible to open the door on the driver's side.

At Tucumcari, New Mexico, our decrepit Daisy met further deterioration as a very heavy hailstorm broke the side glasses out and perforated the ceiling. For the rest of the summer our only protection from rain as we traveled was our tarpaulin, which we draped over the top of the car.

On June 18, 1934, Dave and I crossed the Mexican border at El Paso. We were required to leave a sum of $75 as a bond for Daisy. This sum was exactly three times the amount Dave had paid for her. We argued that it was preposterous to bond a car for more than it was worth, but the bonding company placed the value of the car much higher than we did. We tried to sell the car to them for half the amount of the bond, but were refused. This drain on our resources left us with but $125 between us for the summer. The only consolation was the assurance of something to live on when we returned and lifted the bond.

Daisy was much more delicate and feeble than Ed's car of the previous trip. We should not have expected it to serve as a truck, yet we had an extremely heavy load. The inside of the car, of course, was full. In the front seat we straddled boxes and sat on part of our bedding. The rest of the bedding was rolled in waterproof bags and tied to the crossarm behind the headlamps. Boxes were tied to the running boards, and additional baggage was placed here and there around the box on the hind end. Two spare tires were tied on top of the box.

All of this weight was just too much for Daisy and her springs. The front springs broke just before we reached the border. We replaced them at El Paso with a new set that we hoped would serve us the rest of the summer.

The road south of Ciudad Juárez for some distance was well graveled. It passed through a great, semiarid desert, over which were scattered occasional, barren hills.

Several miles north of Moctezuma the improved road abruptly terminated. In its stead was a mere trail. About two miles north of the town we entered a narrow, sandy area. We rushed it, but Daisy didn't have enough power to pull through. We stopped in deep sand. For half an hour we sweated and dug, pushing until the car reached solid ground. During this time a small herd of cattle far ahead came thundering across the railroad off to the right, pursued by a cowboy on horseback, firing into the air in all directions and shouting like a madman. In a few minutes he and the cattle disappeared into the brush, accompanied by much rumbling and the cracking of the gun.

In ten or fifteen minutes we reached Moctezuma, where we entered a bar to cool off from our labors in the sand. The sheriff of the town approached us as we drank our beer, and I anticipated what he would say, as it was the expected greeting.

"Where did you boys come from?" he asked in Spanish.

"Juárez," I replied. The second question, where we were headed, was obviously coming, but it was a rapid flow that we really didn't understand. Assuming that it was just a different way of asking the same old thing, "Where are you going," I promptly replied "Chihuahua."

The reply was followed by hearty guffaws from the men at the bar. Then a stranger stepped forward. "What did you think he said?" he asked in accented English.

"Why, where we were going," we replied.

"No," he responded, laughing. "He asked whether you had happened to see a man up the road chasing some cattle!"

The embarrassment of the situation cured me of pretending to understand Spanish when it went over my head.

South of Moctezuma we had no difficulty with the road. In rain it would have been bad, but it was then dry and hard, leading over flat plains, threading between hills, always east and within sight of the Sierra Madre to the west. Most of the way it followed in general the railroad, seldom going out of sight of it.

At a large swampy area enclosing a moderately large lake the road branched with no indication which would lead to Chihuahua. Near the fork in the road stood a group of houses, where we stopped to inquire. The first two houses appeared to be empty. At the third house I started to go around to the back door, no one appearing at the front. As I did so, a man walked out from behind with a rifle held across his chest. Without thinking it unusual, I continued walking toward him, whereupon the rifle was lifted and pointed toward me, although not aimed. At every step the sights of the rifle came nearer and nearer to an alignment with me. I shouted to the man in alarm, afraid he was serious in his actions. His reply was a short, curt command to get out. Hoping he would at least give us directions, I asked which was the road to Chihua-

hua, but the reply was an even more menacing command to leave, which I did without further delay.

After we had gone a mile or two, a car appeared from behind, loaded to the gills with men, all armed with rifles. Among them was the man who had ordered me to leave his property. They did not bother us as they passed, nor did they even speak. Quite possibly they were just off on a hunting trip, as rabbits were very common there, but Dave and I were suspicious enough to make our camp a little later far out of sight of the road to Chihuahua.

In Chihuahua we stopped for gas and to inquire about a road shown on our map leading to a town named Guerrero in the Sierra Madre. The attendants directed us to the road, but smirked knowingly as we told them we wanted to go to Guerrero.

There had been a fiesta in Chihuahua. The whole road was jammed with people walking, riding on burros, or in oxcarts. The file of pedestrians was occasionally parted to permit the passage of a car or fast-moving oxcart. There were two dirt trails, running more or less parallel, over most of the route. The cars took the more direct and ostensibly better of the two, joined by some of the pedestrians, but most of the latter preferred the oxcart route. All the animals of burden and oxcarts were supposed by law to take the poorer, somewhat more devious route, but the distinction was not always clear. We tried in general to take the road less traveled by oxcarts and burros, but we had the distinct impression that at times they were on the road that we were supposed to take.

We traveled slowly in the throng that led from Chihuahua far out of the city, farther than the eye could see, probably all the way to Guerrero. Constantly going up and down hills, even though not particularly steep, Daisy's brakes and drive train were getting a worrisome lot of wear. If we continued on, we would probably wear them out. Unless Guerrero turned out to be a large town, we would be out of luck, stuck there without repair. Moreover, camping near the road with this constant stream of people passing us was not a pleasant prospect. Probably most of them would disappear in the evening, but even so there would be some stragglers, probably not of the type we would like to meet. Having just finished celebrating a fiesta, considerable numbers of the men were wobbling unsteadily, and a few were even passed out here and there.

We had already gone ten or fifteen miles from Chihuahua by the time that these alternatives became apparent. We pulled the car off the road to consider more carefully what course to take. The car was on a grassy plain gently sloping upward toward the base of a mountain not far distant. Oak and cedar trees covered the lower mountainside, abruptly terminating about a quarter of a mile from us. Before anything else was done, I had to preserve the lizards we had shot earlier in the day, to prevent them from decomposing any further. On the high plateau we could leave dead lizards about twenty-four hours without harming them, but here, in the hot desert sun, the lizards decomposed very rapidly, and if not preserved within three or four hours they could not be salvaged.

While I preserved the animals, Dave took a rifle and left for the oak and cedar forest. In half an hour I had preserved and cataloged everything, and was just putting away the equipment when Dave came back.

"How was it?"

"Okay," he replied, but rather breathlessly and nervously. "But, say, we don't want to stay here. Let's get going back to Chihuahua. You ready?"

"Yeah, I'm ready, but what the devil is the hurry? What happened?"

"Oh, hell, I wish you had been with me. I was just walking along in that forest up there just ahead, kicking around in the leaves and turning stones. I heard a noise away up ahead of me, and there was a man with a rifle and cartridge belt, standing partly behind a tree. In a few minutes I saw some more. The whole woods is full of them, they might just be hunters, but they don't act right. They'd hide behind trees, and keep slipping up on me. I pretended as though I didn't see them, but kept working backwards. Look! Look up there! There's one of them now. See, standing up there just behind that tree out in front?"

I couldn't see anything, but I was fully convinced that we had better get out of there before darkness fell.

We stopped for gasoline in Chihuahua at the same filling station as before. The attendant laughed at our report in a knowing way—he probably was quite aware that it would have been risky to have continued.

That night we traveled far from Chihuahua, far into the distance, until there was nothing but broad, flat desert plains, broken by barren, uninhabited mountains. The only sounds were the howls of coyotes, the shrill call of innumerable insects, and the occasional zoom of a power-diving nighthawk. We felt much more secure.

In due time we began following a power line. Sometimes the road which accompanied it was not as good as the main road which wandered back and forth on the broad plains, but we knew when we were following it that we would not be getting off onto dead-end side roads. Occasionally we would take the road along the railroad instead, although it made little difference whether we followed power line or railroad. All were unmaintained trails, even the "main" highway, which however branched confusingly without any signs to help.

Our first long stop south of the border was at Río San Pedro, a broad, shallow, clear stream issuing from mountains far in the western haze. A single family lived on the riverside. The man was the inspector of the power line, and was permanently stationed there. Their adobe home was average, with at least three rooms that we saw. The floor was dirt, and hogs, chickens and dogs had full access to the combined kitchen and dining room, as well as the living room. We did not see them in the bedroom. There was no toilet, neither indoor nor outdoor. When one felt the urge of nature, one had but to wander out behind some hillock or thick clump of vegetation, hoping for privacy. It was much as elsewhere, where we watched the early

morning exodus of seemingly all of the inhabitants of a village, all walking in the same direction into the dim morning mist.

During our stay at Río San Pedro we ate with this native family. We had first visited them in hopes of purchasing groceries, but they preferred to sell us prepared meals.

It was with reluctance that we left the river. Its cooling waters were a great relief from the sweltering heat of the sun that bore down unmercifully all day long. However, each day a bank of dark clouds formed in the west, each afternoon edging farther east and warning us that if we remained we would soon be drenched with rain. Rather than risk getting marooned on this road, which would be tough to negotiate in wet weather, we pulled up stakes and continued on.

At Río Conchos we entered a broad, fertile area sitting like a huge oasis in the barren desert surrounding it. A big irrigation project, government controlled, had turned that wasteland into a fertile paradise. An artificial lake, Presa de la Boquilla, had been produced by a dam across the river. At the dam was a power plant serving all the surrounding country with electricity. The amount of machinery and construction going on was amazing, especially in the middle of such a barren area. The area included in that irrigation project was said to be as great as that in Imperial Valley in southern California.

At Escalón we stopped to fill our gasoline tank, taking no chances. We did not want to stall for lack of fuel somewhere in this little-populated desert. We filled our water bags also, and left with a hopeful hitchhiker on his way to Guadalajara. He had been walking the rails, bumming rides in cars and on freight trains whenever possible.

That evening we came to a small arroyo about half a mile north of Conejos, so swollen with water from the heavy rains to the west that we could not possibly cross. We could only wait until the water subsided. It was already evening when we arrived, so our friend joined us in preparation of our meal, and assisted greatly in disposing of it.

Dave and I prepared to collect on the desert, while our friend stayed with the car, curled up on the ground, wrapped in his sarape. With lighted lanterns we crossed the arroyo by means of a nearby railroad bridge, and followed the railroad about two miles. We turned back at another arroyo, this one so flooded that the water was flowing over the level ground about three hundred feet on either side.

On the following day the arroyo was too flooded to be safe for crossing with the car. Our friend had tired of waiting, and left us, hoofing it down the railroad toward Torreón. He probably reached it faster than we did in our car.

On the third day the water in the arroyo had subsided sufficiently for us to try crossing. We looked with apprehension upon its muddy bottom, because a few feet from the crossing was a hopelessly mired burro, sunk in the mud up to its flanks.

We were hopeful, however, and packed all of our luggage into the car in preparation for our departure. We backed Daisy around, but our dash to cross never materialized: the motor sputtered and stalled. We had filled our tank only thirty miles before, but it was now empty. We never understood where all the gas went.

Conejos, a half-mile ahead, was nothing more than a railway station, and the single family living there had no gasoline. The nearest source would be Bermejillo, twenty miles down the road, toward Torreón.

Neither Dave nor I was anxious to walk the twenty miles to Bermejillo, and twenty back carrying two jugs of gasoline. Under ordinary conditions a forty-mile walk would not be out of line, but here, where the heat was so oppressive, it would be difficult. We therefore decided to wait in the hope that a car would come along. None had passed during the whole time we had been there, but we thought that surely one must be due.

On the fourth day our water and most of our food gave out. The family at Conejos furnished us with water from a steel drum that collected the rain falling from the roof. They also sold us tortillas, eggs and bread, which we ate with peanut butter and onions. We did not lack sufficient food, but the diet was cramped.

Occasionally we collected on the hot desert plains. We could not wander very far away, for we wanted to be on hand when, if ever, a car passed. We could not unpack the car, for we needed to be ready to move at once. The inertia was depressing, and as the sun rose for the sixth time since our arrival, the waiting became intolerable. We decided that I would leave that night as the sun sank low in the west, and in preparation we took refuge under Daisy, where it still was almost insufferably hot.

However, early in the afternoon we heard the welcome sound of an approaching car from the north. It was another Ford—a replica of Daisy—and although they would not sell us any gas, they would let one of us ride with them to Bermejillo. At least it would only be a twenty-mile hike to return to our car. So I crawled up on top of their car, sitting on a pile of old clothes, spare tires, pots and pans, grasping two jugs for gasoline.

It was a precarious ride, hanging onto tires and balancing as the car careened and bounced. We had just crossed the second arroyo, two miles beyond the one we had camped beside for so long, when we saw a truck, laden—miracle of miracles—with several steel drums of gasoline. It was headed north, on another trail three hundred feet to our right. We hailed them, and the two men with it readily agreed to sell me the gasoline. Hastily bidding adieu to the southbound family, I climbed gratefully aboard the northbound truck and away we went.

All was not well even yet. Hardly had the truck started when it sank into the soft mud of the arroyo. For two hours we labored, trying to free it, but without success. They had no spade, so I walked back to our car, and Dave and I returned with the spade, and worked with them until darkness fell. We managed to get the truck across the arroyo, but it became stuck again in the mud on the other side.

Operations ceased at dark, but the following morning Dave and I returned, bought two gallons of gasoline and left our shovel with the truck until we would pass them on our way to

Bermejillo. At last we were ready to leave, and had enough gasoline to get us to Bermejillo. Our worries should be over.

However, fate intervened again, as it seemed compelled to do the entire summer. Daisy couldn't make the grade up the far side of our arroyo. We unloaded her completely, but now she was so tilted that gasoline would not enter the motor. Moreover, the slick bottom of the arroyo would allow no purchase for the tires. The wheels would spin, but Daisy wouldn't move.

Wearily we walked back for the spade. The truck was still mired, but its owners relinquished the spade. After much pushing and digging, Daisy came through, and pulled herself out of the arroyo.

By the time we reached the second arroyo, the truck had just been freed from its mudhole. We retrieved our spade, which they had come for just before we pulled out of the first arroyo. Giving Daisy the gun, we took no chances on the second arroyo, crashing through at full speed.

At Bermejillo, we promptly spent all of our ready money for groceries. Then I looked for a bank where we could cash some of our traveler's checks, for we needed more money to buy gasoline there. There was no bank. I visited the four largest stores in town, but none would cash the checks, nor would the railroad station. We could hop a freight train to Torreón, cash a check there and return, but we had not a single centavo. One needed at least fifty centavos to bum a ride on a freight; otherwise one would be kicked off by the brakeman.

For several hours we tried to find some loophole whereby we could free ourselves from the trap, and eventually I persuaded one Emilio del Río to loan me five pesos, providing we left some security. We left him our best spare tire, promising to return the five pesos as soon as we arrived in Torreón, and Emilio was to return the tire to us in Saltillo.

At Torreón we completed our share of the bargain, returning seven pesos to our friend in Bermejillo. Thenceforth we always cashed more than enough checks in the larger towns to furnish money for our expenses in reaching another town of sufficient size.

East of Torreón our front springs broke a second time, but fortunately we had with us a spare, which we had bought in Torreón, in anticipation of what was to happen.

At Saltillo we inquired for our tire, but it was not there. We waited an extra day for it, but it still did not arrive. As we left town, we instructed the express and freight companies to hold it until we returned, in case it arrived through either channel. The tire itself, of course, was of no great value, but all had been listed by number by the bonding company at the border, and we had been warned that if any were missing when we returned there would be a penalty of $15 each deducted from our deposit of $75. If all six were missing, we would have to pay $15 to be permitted to return to the U.S. Even if the tires might be in pieces, they must be taken back with us.

Of course, all this is what should have been. Actually, we returned with only four of the six original tires. Emilio never returned the tire we left with him, and the other we lost somewhere in Zacatecas. We did not have to pay for the loss of these tires at the border, but only because we crossed at Laredo, not at Juárez, where we entered. We sent our copy of the bond, with the OK of the border officials at Laredo, to the bonding company in Juárez, and received the $75 due us.

Our intent was to take the road from Saltillo to San Luis Potosí—the same route that Taylor and I had traveled two years before. But somewhere, a short distance south of Saltillo, we lost our route, and soon found ourselves in Concepción del Oro, in the northern part of the state of Zacatecas.

The territory was new and promised to be interesting. Rather than return to the road to San Luis Potosí, we elected to make the best of the situation and continue toward the city of Zacatecas.

Southward, almost all the way to Zacatecas, the road led across vast, far-reaching plains, cool and elevated. The flat character of the land was broken only by widely scattered mountain ranges, none near the road. We could see, however, that they were heavily forested down almost to their bases.

The plains were covered by great numbers of yuccas interspersed between low bushes. Frequently the bushes and diminutive trees were higher than the car, so that usually we could enjoy panoramic views only from occasional low rises. From the tops of these mounds we could see five or six haciendas scattered over the plains, all widely separated from each other. Sometimes we visited some of the nearer haciendas, buying gasoline, food and water from their owners.

The water, for all purposes, these people derived from ponds, usually near the houses. There seemed to be no attempt to keep domestic animals away from the ponds, as there was ample evidence of their constant use by them. Despite the evil appearance of the muddy water, covered by green scum and full of particles of dirt and excrement, the locals drank it, and at least not all of them died from it. We, too, drank it as there was nothing better.

Strangely, the locals seemed to trust only the water they were accustomed to drinking. At one time when Dave and I were repairing the car in an isolated region, we had to fill our bags with water, not purified in any manner, from roadside pools. These, assuredly, were obviously polluted by cattle and horses, but no more so than the ponds in regular use near houses. A local man who happened along asked for a drink, and we offered him the water bag which we had been using regularly.

"Where did you get this?" he queried suspiciously.

"From that pond there," we said, pointing to a roadside pool. He shook his head, and returned the water bag untouched. Yet I venture that the water that he was accustomed to drinking was no less polluted.

At one hacienda, two boys of about our age persuaded us to let them ride with us a few miles, giving the excuse that they wanted to look for some cattle. Dave and I crawled inside,

slammed the door securely shut, and told our friends to jump on the running boards. This likely was their first ride in a car, for they hung on with a deathlike grip. And, as Dave let the motor warm up a little before moving off, they frequently looked in at us with questioning glances, as though the car were not functioning properly. As we started off, the boys waved gaily at their watching friends, then retrieved their iron grip on the car. I told them to tell us when they wanted to stop, and they nodded in understanding. We were cruising along at normal speed when suddenly both boys jumped off without warning. Both fell down head over heels, unused to jumping off of fast-moving vehicles. We slowed to a stop, fearing they might have been injured, but they both jumped to their feet with smiles on their faces, so we continued on.

At San Tiburcio, a large hacienda, we stopped to have our rifles fixed. Daisy wasn't the only source of our difficulties. Before departing from the States I had taken a rare opportunity to buy 5,000 rounds of shot shells at $30, a price much lower than listed. I did not at the time realize it, but the shells were loaded with black gunpowder, and were of a type being discontinued. I had previously been using the more recent type, with smokeless gunpowder, which did not leave a deposit in the gun barrel. These shells, however, left so much deposit that after about one hundred shells were shot, the barrel would be almost completely occluded. The last few shells before complete closure would explode with a mighty noise, making our ears ring for hours. Even worse, the powder would fly out of the breech, some getting into our eyes, which would be bloodshot and painful for days after such experiences. We tried to keep the barrels clean by scraping them with a bent wire, but with little success. We had to have the barrels re-bored in Saltillo, and already, in San Tiburcio, they were again clogged.

The outlay of machinery at San Tiburcio was impressive. Being a town in itself, and a very successful and happy one, the *haciendado* found it necessary to provide everything that would be needed in a municipality. The machinery available was even better than in the shop we patronized in Saltillo, for the rifles came back with much cleaner and shinier barrels than they did at Saltillo.

Somewhere in Zacatecas, far north of San Tiburcio as I recall, we passed through a town composed of most curious dwellings. The houses were entirely thatched, of tepee form, some twenty-five feet high, and of small diameter at the base—about twelve feet. The supports were lashed together at the top, the bare tips of the poles projecting several inches into the air.

About fifty miles south of San Tiburcio, Daisy's hind end began to growl ominously. The growl soon became a roar, and Daisy began to run erratically, coming nearly to a sudden stop with a jerk, then run along as usual. After a few miles she jerked to a final stop, and under her own power would move neither forward nor backward. The rear wheels were locked. We pushed her off the road, and then stood around surveying the situation from all angles.

For repair work, we had one jack, two wrenches, a pair of pliers, a hammer, screwdriver and two pocket knives. For our own needs, we had one gallon of water, one box of oatmeal, a few buns, some onions, and a package of cigarettes. Should we need help, it would be a ten-mile walk back to Majoma, or forty miles ahead to Sierra Hermosa.

Since our supplies were low, we could not spend much time collecting. We could not use our gasoline lanterns much either, for we would need the gasoline to reach the next town. Fortunately, we wouldn't waste gasoline in our camp stove, because it was no longer functioning. Unfortunately, there was no dry wood. Without fire, the oatmeal was useless.

It was obvious that there was no time to lose if we expected to leave our encampment before our supplies ran out. Without further deliberation, we settled down to serious labor over-hauling the differential, where we guessed the trouble lay. It took three of our wooden grub and miscellany boxes to hold Daisy's body as her wheels were taken off. On the second day we finally penetrated her differential, and found that two of the several large washers were ground to thousands of fragments. We had no spare washers. Our only hope was to balance the number of washers on each side, hoping that the missing ones would not interfere with Daisy's locomotion.

On the third day we assembled Daisy's various and miscellaneous parts, much handicapped by lack of tools. All was done except screwing the nut on the axle on one side. In removing the axle two days before, lacking the pulling apparatus one should have, we were forced to pound on one end, holding a screwdriver against the steel shaft, and pounding the screwdriver with a hammer. During this long, slow process, we had spread the end of the axle enough that now the nut would not fit. It seemed that again we were foiled, but Dave went excavating far into the interior and produced a single sheet of emery paper. All we had to do was to whittle the axle down sufficiently with jealously guarded bits of emery paper, until the nut would screw on. It seemed an endless effort, but eventually we succeeded.

In the meantime, our supply of water had long since been exhausted. It was here that we resorted to filling the bags with water from standing pools, regardless of unsavory appearance and bovine associations. Food was getting to be a serious problem. We had eaten all of our bread, nothing now remaining but oatmeal. We were contemplating the possibilities of raw oatmeal serving as food, when, for the first time in our three-day stay, a car came past. It fairly bristled with rifles, every one of the six men in it having a rifle and pistol. They stopped, curious. As they stepped out we saw that they were army men. When we stated that we had been there for three days, they were highly sympathetic. What seemed most peculiar to them was that we should have been unharmed all of that time. They were fearful of bandits, and thought we were exceedingly fortunate in not having encountered any. Learning that we were essentially foodless, and that our cigarettes had long since given out, they gave us a box of crackers (all the food they had) and a pack of cigarettes, for which they would take no money.

On the fourth day Daisy was completely assembled. We dismounted our tarpaulin, which had been stretched out from

the car the whole time, and prepared to continue our journey. Daisy, however, was not ready. Her batteries were so weak that they would not start the motor. We tried pushing, but the two of us could not budge the car. Somehow, during her long stay there, Daisy had become so stiff that it would take more than our strength to move her.

While we were awaiting another car for help, a Mexican suddenly appeared in camp. We talked with him a few minutes, and were glad to accept his invitation to eat at his home. Not having seen a house anywhere around, and having heard no sounds associated with human habitations, we had assumed that no homes were near. He assured us, however, that his home was very, very near.

If a mile could be called very near, so it was. It was low-slung, completely hidden from the road by mesquite trees and yuccas. Thatch-roofed, its sides were made of long, slender poles. The spaces between the poles were filled with dried mud. In reality there were two houses to his home, one comprising only the kitchen and dining room. In one corner was a fireplace, over which sat the omnipresent bean kettle. There was no ventilation system, the smoke accumulating so thickly that tears ran from our eyes, somewhat to our embarrassment as we noticed that our Mexican friends were dry-eyed.

As we awaited our meal, we glanced around at the furnishings and decorations. Dried strips of meat hung from projecting stubs on the wall. Lacking refrigeration, no alternative existed, hence it was virtually universal practice in the back country. One has to become inured to the flies and beetles that visit the meat, especially when fresh and fragrant.

The light consisted of a tiny kerosene lamp, throwing such a faint light that one could scarcely see what was being eaten—perhaps just as well. The furniture consisted of four very low chairs, the seat about a foot from the ground. The table was scarcely two feet high, but at least it was a table and as such more or less a luxury. Both Dave and I were of small stature, but we found it very uncomfortable as we ate at the table, with our knees projecting above it and our legs spraddled as though we were contortionists.

Prepared by much fasting over the preceding few days, we ate our eggs, rice, beans and *café con leche* with as much relish as though we were served a king's banquet. As we sipped the last dregs of our coffee, we heard a car on the road, going toward our own. By the time we reached the road, the car had passed, but we continued to our car to cover it with the tarpaulin, since it was raining by then. The car that had passed was but a few yards ahead anyhow, mired in the middle of the road. Already the occupants had ransacked our belongings, and were using our spade to help extricate their own car.

The owner was Pedro Ganval, a burly, good-hearted Mexican who owned a grocery and notions store at La Colorada, some seventy-five miles away, by road. The distance was only thirty-five miles as the crow flies. It was already dusk, so efforts to extricate the car ceased. Our Mexican friend who had fed us promised to bring burros on the morrow to pull Pedro's car out of the mire, and Pedro, in turn, would give Daisy a pull to start her.

We set up our tarpaulin for the last time, happy that on the morrow we would at last leave our all too familiar campsite. We bid adios to our friend who fed us, and loaned him our flashlight so he could see his way home. He was to bring it back the next morning.

During the night, however, a vicious wind and heavy rain came near to washing or blowing us away. We could truthfully say that we had running water in camp. After an hour or two of rain, a torrent was rushing under our cots, while Daisy rocked alarmingly in the wind. The tarpaulin constantly threatened to blow away, leaving us to the mercy of the rain. Rather than lose it, we frequently crawled out, shivering in the cold, penetrating wind and rain, and pegged down the constantly loosening stakes or tightened the stays on the opposite side of Daisy. We needed no light, for crackling lightning lit up the scene every few seconds. Most of the night we were awake, fighting the elements. Just before dawn the storm spent its energy, and left us with most of ours spent too.

We immediately fell asleep, and were awakened by Pedro, shouting to us that his car was now free and he was ready to help us. As we came sleepily from under the soaked and heavy tarpaulin, we were greeted with a whole crowd of men, come from heaven knows where, with quantities of burros. We indeed must have been tired to have slept through all the noise they must have made.

While we had slept, not only had Pedro extricated his own car, but the local residents had also been busy picking up all of our tools that lay in sight around camp. This we did not discover until it was too late to retrieve them. But even after we had arisen and were clearing camp, one bold fellow took one of our water bags over his shoulder and started off with it. We shouted to him, and started to chase him, whereupon he returned the bag. Ironically, it was the same person who had fed us the night before. We had paid him well for the meal he provided, and felt we owed him nothing. While he was cornered, we asked for the flashlight we had loaned to him the night before, but of course he claimed to have forgotten to bring it.

But Pedro roped his car to ours, and with no great effort Daisy was again purring—the first time in five days. Pedro invited us to spend a few days at his home in La Colorada, and we accepted with alacrity. We broke the way through the mud ahead of his car, passing through Villa de Coz, then northward to La Colorada.

This little town in Zacatecas was situated on the Torreón-Zacatecas highway, and its inhabitants could not have numbered more than a couple hundred. Pedro's grocery store faced onto the main street, and his home was connected with the store. He made room for us in the backyard, where we pitched the tarpaulin—over Daisy, of course, because her roof still leaked.

We ate our meals with Pedro and his family of four, which was unusually small for the territory. However, he was rapidly rectifying the situation, another addition arriving while we

were there. His wife was exceedingly good-looking, and an excellent cook. The *café con leche* and sour milk dessert she regularly prepared seemed the best I had ever tasted. We probably dismayed them with the amount of *café con leche* we regularly drank. The ever-present bean pot was probably our downfall; we were convinced that it brewed more than beans, although it was not until later that the effects were felt. We were gratefully free from intestinal discomforts while there.

About half a mile west of town was a small, artificial lake impounded by an earthen dam across a small stream. So far as we could determine, the lake served only the needs of cattle, numerous in that area. It was an excellent collecting site for us, however, for at night toads sang there in great choruses.

About ten miles west of La Colorada was a dark green, pine-clad range of mountains from which issued numerous, deep barrancas extending far out onto the plains toward and beyond La Colorada. Near the mountains the barrancas were very narrow and steep-sided, becoming deeper, wider and with more slanting sides toward the plains. One barranca passed just south of town, and several times we followed it westward, turning thousands of stones along its sides hoping to find herps of various sorts, but never with any success.

On the morning of the day preceding our intended departure, I wandered farther up the canyon than we had previously gone, turning rocks as usual but without success. As I was climbing the side to leave for town, a loud buzz at my feet warned me that a rattlesnake was near. Before I could grab the snake, it disappeared into a hole under a rock. It was fortunate that I did not catch it before it escaped, else I likely would never have found what was under the rock.

The stone was very large, much too heavy for me to have moved had it not been on a slope. As it was, only by straining every muscle to the utmost limit could I lift the rock a short distance. It was so heavy that I couldn't finish the job, so I braced it on my knee, thinking I could prod the snake out while holding the rock in that position. I glanced under, and to my astonishment there was not just one rattlesnake but a whole nest of them, some already crawling out from the depression. With the supreme effort fostered of necessity, I sent the rock toppling end over end down the canyon wall.

There was just one large rattlesnake, a female. The rest were neonates, probably her own. I broke a branch from a nearby bush, put one foot on the big rattlesnake, and then began prodding the little fellows into the depression that was under the rock. As fast as I hooked them back, they crawled out, until it seemed that I would never get them calmed down. Eventually, however, all were quiet at the bottom of the hole. Taking the rifle butt, I placed it on the big rattlesnake's head, and picked her up. The snake was only about three feet long, but it was with some difficulty that I forced it into a small sack about the size of a ten-pound sugar bag.

Then came the long job of collecting the small snakes. It was not safe to reach in and pick them up one by one. Instead, I prodded out first one, then another, picking up each in turn and placing it into my other sack of the same size as the one with the big rattlesnake. As the sack became full, with still two or three snakes to be caught, I again had difficulty keeping them in place, while trying to squeeze the few remaining into whatever little space was left.

It took half an hour to catch the young ones, and it was then after one o'clock, when Pedro insisted on having the noon meal. If I expected anything to eat, I had to get going.

Dave and I returned to the canyon that afternoon, and went farther up than before. During the afternoon we caught about thirty more rattlesnakes. Frequently several would be under one rock, as was the female and her brood that I had found in the morning.

The next morning we started to preserve the rattlesnakes, and found, to our surprise, that we had thirty-two more than we had collected. Two of the pregnant females had brought forth their broods of young during the night. The other pregnant female we carried alive with us for several days, until she too bore her young. All told, we acquired over ninety rattlesnakes in one day.

While we had been at La Colorada, Pedro had gone to Cañitas with his wife, in order to have a doctor at hand when the blessed event took place. He had admired my .22 Harrington and Richardson revolver so much that I let him take it with him. As an added decoration I loaned him a Sam Browne belt, for which the holster was adapted. The holster itself was of the open type, with leather cords to tie the end to the leg. Pedro gloated over his new acquisition, however temporary, and adopted an exaggerated swagger to correspond with the increased importance a revolver implies. He derived so much pleasure from wearing it that, when we left La Colorada a few days later, I told him he could keep it until we came back on our way home. He was so overjoyed that we had the pleasure of our first, full-fledged adieu, Mexican style—an embrace with a touch of cheek to cheek on both sides. We then shook hands, and Dave and I were off. Of course we never returned by way of La Colorada, so perhaps Pedro's family still has that revolver.

Ciudad Zacatecas was the most energetic city we visited in Mexico. We had to stop two days there to have Daisy overhauled. During our stay we learned that we could supposedly easily reach Aguascalientes, and that there was a good road from there to Guadalajara. Again visions of reaching that city loomed before us, and we determined that this time we would make it. Ed and I had been unable to do so two years before.

Rain had preceded us as we left for Aguascalientes, and had washed away much of the improved gravel road. As a result, we were forced to take a long, devious and muddy route. About eight miles from Aguascalientes our muddy trail joined the new road. However, within sight of the new road, we found a raging torrent intercepting all connections save a railroad bridge some six hundred feet long. The muddy, swirling waters were right up to the ties themselves, tugging ominously at them as they pushed against debris caught against the bridge. We decided to give the bridge a try, despite the rather considerable risk of the bridge collapsing, or a train coming along, or of the car stalling. Indeed, a considerable crowd gathered at each end of the bridge to see whether we

would make it or not. It was a harrowing experience to climb onto the ties, across the rails, and even more to so slowly bounce, jostle and jog over six hundred feet of bridge while the torrent lapped at the wheels themselves. We made it, with a great sigh of relief, but there were serious mental reservations about ever trying again to collect by car in Mexico in the rainy season.

We were at last on a good gravel road that would lead all the way to Aguascalientes, but we had gone only two or three miles when Daisy sputtered a last gasp and we discovered we were out of gas. Heads said I should walk to town for gas, although there should have been no choice because Dave was by then suffering the effects of those bean-pot organisms.

In Aguascalientes Daisy's differential began growling in a suspicious way, but we decided to try to get to Guadalajara before having her overhauled again. We had gone about eight miles south of Aguascalientes when the gears slipped noisily behind, and again we were stuck with a burned-out differential. We pushed the car to the top of a little rise between two deep, practically straight-sided canyons cut sharply into the extremely deep soil.

Having had much practice in Zacatecas, we had the differential torn down by nightfall. This time there could be no adjustment of washers. We had to have a complete replacement set. The next day Dave was to walk to Aguascalientes, since I would not know what parts were needed.

In the meantime, occasional passersby on foot stopped and extended their sympathies. Each one filled us with mounting apprehension for what the night might bring. We were told that no one ever showed his face after dark in these parts, for thieves were numerous and dangerous. Supposedly a band of them lived in one of the arroyos beside which we were camped. Campers always met with misfortune, and two were murdered just a short time before, so we were told, on the very spot where we had pitched our camp.

As a result of this gossip and rumor, we were literally quaking as darkness fell. We took the precaution of building our cooking fire before dark, so we could eat and extinguish the fire before nightfall. By dusk we were all alone. No one passed. The gossipers were correct in stating that no one traveled there at night. We were in utter darkness and solitude.

Soon the moon rose above the eastern horizon. We extracted all of our artillery and put it within easy reach. As we were softly talking under the tarpaulin, straining our ears for the slightest telltale noise, a rustle in the gravel off toward one of the arroyos made our eyes bulge and our faces turn white. As we listened in absolute tenseness, another rustle greeted us. The suspense was too much. Dave jumped up, picked up a rifle, and walked around the side of the car in the direction from which the noises had come. And there, silhouetted against the dark sky, was a black form, topped by a big sombrero. The object stood motionless. Quaking all over, Dave shouted in a falsetto voice (in Spanish), "Who's there?" No sound, no movement. "What do you want?" Dave shouted, more nervous than ever. No reply, no movement. Again the suspense was too great. Dave walked toward the image, but it did not retreat. Then I came out with a lighted lantern and another rifle. Lifting the lantern high to better see what manner of man this might be, we discovered to our relief that we had been watching a yucca, whose cap of projecting leaves had taken on the appearance of a sombrero.

The shock of the incident, however innocuous, was too much for my nerves. My scalp was constantly tensed, my ears back, every shadow concealing dangers. I could hear a frog chorus far in the distance, and using that as an excuse I left Dave to get away from that creepy place. Dave was still miserably cramped, and could not exercise much. It was a dirty trick to leave him alone to face the unknown threats, but that is the way it was.

As usual, the frog calls had been carrying an extremely long distance. It was only after a seemingly interminable walk that I arrived at the pond where they were singing. For several hours I concentrated all thought on catching the slippery creatures. When at last I had satisfied my curiosity and had nearly filled my sacks, I straightened up from the stooping position I had held constantly while collecting, muscles exhausted. I reflected that now even that abominable camping site would be a welcome refuge.

Wearily I set out for home, but as I glanced at the sky to get my bearings, I was much alarmed to see nothing but blackness. I had started out under a clear sky, but now all was cloudy. One direction seemed like another. Even the mountains faintly silhouetted in the far distant horizon did not look familiar. For about an hour I wandered around, hoping my intuition would lead me in the proper direction. Soon several dogs began barking ahead, and I then knew I was going wrong. I turned back, sat down at the base of a tree in an arroyo, turned out the lantern and waited for dawn.

It was cold. My sweater could not keep me warm. I curled up into as tight a ball as possible, keeping body heat in as well as I could. In the meantime it began to drizzle. Water dripped off of my bare head and ran down the middle of my back, while I shivered. If I moved a leg or arm, that part would lose heat and I would begin the shiver as of the ague. There was nothing to do but to retain the cramped position.

Hours passed. Perhaps I dozed off once or twice, but most of the time I just sat, wishing fervently that I had stayed with Dave. Gradually the horizon in the east became more distinct. A misty fog had settled over the land, so even as it became lighter I could not see very far. Painfully I arose, every muscle cramped and every joint stiff. To keep warm until it became lighter, I exercised at the edge of the arroyo, working enough to bring back good spirits and to limber aching muscles and joints.

In about half an hour, after leaving the arroyo where I had spent the night, I found the camp. Dave was still in bed, but not asleep. He had spend nearly as sleepless a night as I, the tales of the dangers of our campsite haunting him with renewed vigor with my prolonged absence.

That morning Dave was fortunate enough to catch a ride in

a surrey to Aguascalientes, returning that night. On the morning of the fourth day we were ready again to travel.

To the south we entered a hilly region that sorely taxed Daisy's power. Here the muffler dropped off, and now Daisy too—like most cars in that area—roared with a powerful-sounding noise that belied her age and weakness. We did not take the "main" highway through Encarnación because, we were told, the rivers were impassable. Instead the recommendation was that we take the route through Belén, although it ultimately proved to be a dead end too.

At Belén we encountered a swollen tributary of the Río Encarnación. Another car was waiting there, its occupants bickering with a man with four mules, who was standing pat on his exorbitant fee for pulling the car across the river. As this man was our only hope for crossing, we paid without much parley. First, however, we had to drain the oil from the crankcase, and our luggage had to be carried over on our backs, or else piled high on Daisy's roof and hood.

Once all the luggage had been carried safely across to the other side, I waded across behind the car with a can of precious oil in each hand. In midstream there was rattle from Daisy, and with innumerable little splashes our toolbox and all of its contents were washed into the river. Some of the boys watching from the shore dived in and retrieved most of the tools, as well as all of the parts of the toolbox, which had floated far downstream. The sides of the toolbox we stuck into cracks and crevices in the luggage, and they were frequently of much service. Most of the tools I learned to straddle.

About twenty-five miles beyond Belén we reached Teocaltiche, a city whose streets wound up and down hills much like the streets in Bisbee, Arizona. It was dark when we left town, but our money was low and hotel bills were sometimes expensive. About two miles out of town, our front spring broke. The fenders sat tight against the tires, making further travel impossible. There was no traffic, so we made camp in the road where Daisy stopped.

In the morning we blocked up the springs, collected all of our miscellaneous equipment, and were ready to return to Teocaltiche. Now the battery and magneto would not work. Try as we might, Daisy wouldn't run. Disgusted with our troubles, I walked back to Teocaltiche and engaged a car to drag Daisy to a garage in disgrace.

For two days we remained in Teocaltiche, supervising the overhauling of our car. There was no garage, but we had found a friend who was something of a mechanic, having a model T Ford of his own. All the parts we replaced in Daisy were secondhand. In order to find them, we scoured the whole town, going to the home of every man who had owned a car similar to ours. This time the front spring was made up with eleven leaves, almost twice the usual number. Later in the summer one of these leaves broke, but the spring as a whole served the remainder of the summer.

We were there forced to give up again the objective of getting to Guadalajara, because we were told that the next three rivers we would have to cross were swollen so badly that no car could even be pulled across. Not only that, but we learned that the river we had crossed north of Teocaltiche was rising, since the rainy season was just now getting under way.

Packing all of our goods, we left Teocaltiche on the morning of the third day. Just at the edge of town we encountered a steep hill that Daisy, even with all the momentum we could give her, could do no more than get started on. I jumped out, blocked the hind wheels, and shouted for Dave to give her the gun. Daisy moved a few inches forward, and I blocked the wheels again. After a few such episodes, Daisy refused to climb at all. We unloaded the car, and, relieved of all that weight, it made it all the way to the top under her own power. We then carried everything ourselves to the top of the hill, reloaded the car, and went on.

True enough, the river at Belén was swollen too high for a safe crossing. The rains had let up during the past two days, however, and there was some hope that the river would subside sufficiently to make a safe crossing before more rains hit. With this hope, we waited there a day and a half while the river gradually subsided millimeter by millimeter.

In the meantime, we rounded up all the young boys in town, offering them a centavo apiece for all of the reptiles and amphibians they could bring in. We did not secure much of value, for it was easier for them to pick up quantities of toads than to go looking for lizards and snakes. Seeing this, we raised the price to five centavos for everything except toads. Then the incoming specimens almost completely fell off. Finally one boy brought in a small, black salamander with big red blotches. Excited, I gave him twenty-five centavos to lead us to where he found it. A whole troop of boys accompanied us. Our guide led us to a banana plantation on the banks of the river Dave and I hoped to cross. The fallen banana leaves and trunks covered the whole bank of the river for a quarter of a mile. We offered five centavos for each salamander found, and all of us dug in our heels and turned fallen trunks and leaves until almost every inch of ground had been covered. Our combined efforts disclosed only about a couple dozen salamanders, but it was enough.

Dave and I spent our first night in the driveway leading between two buildings into a large, open patio. The driveway where Daisy was parked had a ceiling supported by large rafters. As it started to rain, Dave and I pulled our cots under the shelter along with Daisy, settling ourselves for a nice night's rest. We soon discovered however that unfortunately we shared the shelter with many bats, rats and mice which kept us awake much of the night. The rats and mice crawled up on our cots, sniffing about on top of our blankets, while the bats fluttered and squeaked above, constantly firing upon us a barrage of little droppings. Covering our faces with the blankets, we let the animals play and the droppings pelt. In the morning our cots and blankets were black with the refuse that had fallen during the night from above.

Late that afternoon we tried crossing the river. It was not as low as before, but we feared that it might at any time start rising still more. This time we could secure only two mules, but there were at least twenty-five men to help pull. Again we

drained the oil, rearranged the luggage above the expected water line or carried it across on our backs. We were ready.

Out in midstream the mules became excited, and began pulling Daisy downstream, where the current was stronger and the water deeper. Shout as the men would, the mules kept pulling the harder downstream. Suddenly one of the mules lost its footing, fell and came up free from its traces. It was immediately swept downriver, although it saved itself by swimming frantically to the bank. The remaining mule was now wild with fright, rearing and snorting crazily. Left stranded without any pull being exerted forward, Daisy was slowly moving downstream, sinking more and more into the soft bottom. We had visions of losing Daisy completely.

Just then an American mail-carrier, who had been carrying mail between Teocaltiche and Aguascalientes for years, and had been watching the performance from the banks of the river, suddenly threw off his clothes and dived in to make order out of the pandemonium. His authoritative voice calmed the mule, and under his direction every available man pushed or pulled in harmony with the mule, until Daisy was safe on the opposite bank. He had saved the day, and we were heartily grateful for his initiative and leadership. Without it, Daisy almost certainly would have been lost, and without it we would have been stranded.

Daisy now seemed to have no power left at all. At every hill of any length or steepness, we had to lighten her load, carrying our luggage to the top ourselves. It became so much of a custom that we instinctively stopped and unloaded her every time we came to a hill.

Between the hills we frequently encountered mudholes where Daisy would bog down. There too we had to unload her, after which by use of the former toolbox boards we pried her free without recourse to aid from other sources. Twice, on the way back to Aguascalientes, we became stuck in sandy-bottomed rivers, but fortunately in each case several men were passing and were persuaded to help us pull Daisy out.

At Aguascalientes we decided our objective would be the Pan-American Highway on the east coast, going through Ojuelos in northern Jalisco thence to San Luis Potosí. Although the first twenty miles of the road was in good condition, from that point on the road was pure mud. To our surprise, Daisy was superb in pulling slowly but surely through mud that an ordinary car could not begin to negotiate.

The second night out from Aguascalientes, driving with poor lights, we drove off the dimly visible road into a deep mudhole. There was no hope of extricating ourselves from it, but out of nowhere came two men who offered to get their *bueyes* [oxen] to pull us out that very night. As we stood around in utter darkness, awaiting their return, several others came up in their yucca-leaf raincoats to talk and watch. We lit our lantern to guide the men coming with the *bueyes*, but probably unnecessarily, for these campesinos have excellent night vision. Although it was raining very heavily, we passed the hour or two waiting for the *bueyes* very pleasantly, talking with our Mexican friends. They had a peculiar, singsong manner of speaking that was very musical and pleasing to the ear.

As we heard the rattle of the *bueyes*' harness in the distance, our friends began shouting to the drivers as we noted how remarkably far intelligible words in Spanish can carry. Most of the important sounds in Spanish are vowels, which can be shouted with wide open mouth and all the lung power one can muster, whereas in English many of the important sounds are consonants, which frequently cannot be produced in sufficient volume to be heard for more than a few yards.

We were soon freed from the mudhole, and continued on our way. It was now raining cats and dogs. Both Dave and I had again picked up intestinal infections, and felt miserable. We could not hope to make camp in this rain, so we determined to find a place of lodging in the next town.

That town was in almost complete darkness. We knocked at the first house with a light inside, and asked where we might get a room for the night. We were directed to a place across the street. It had three or four doors, all alike. We knocked several minutes at each one, then started all over again. Suddenly a light appeared in one window, and a woman clothed in white stuck out her head. "What do you want?" she asked. "A room," we replied. "Wait a minute at the door."

We waited several minutes, and then impatiently began pounding again. In about ten minutes a lady appeared, opened the huge, barred door, and chided us for making so much noise. She led us to a large, bare room and left, leaving a candle with us for light. She left so quickly that we had no opportunity to ask where we might find the toilet. Foiled, I threw my bedroll on the floor, while Dave took the bed.

However, both Dave and I were cramped. There was a small pot under the washstand, and through the whole night Dave and I took turns with it. Eventually our intestines calmed down, and fortunate it was that they did, for the pot was brim full.

In the morning we ate breakfast at the guest home (*casa de huéspedes*), and hurriedly prepared to leave before anyone could see our room. A maid beat us to it, however, and came out of the room as we entered from breakfast, bearing aloft the pot, covered. She frowned upon us in disgust, as we dropped our heads sheepishly. We made no comment when the lady of the house added an extra fifty cents on the bill.

We reached San Luis Potosí after several days, then headed northward toward Saltillo. A few miles south of Gómez Farías we saw ahead of us an oxcart stopped in the middle of the road. At the side of the road was a group of men excitedly throwing stones at something. "I'll bet they are trying to kill a snake," remarked Dave. Spurred by the thought, we hurriedly drove up to the spot, jumped out and ran over to see. Sure enough, there was a rattlesnake, as yet unharmed. Calling to the men to stop throwing stones, I shouldered my way through them, put my boot on the snake's head, and picked it up, holding it high in the air, to the amazement of the observers. We sacked the snake and drove off, shouting "Adiós" and "Muchas gracias," while the men stood around silently, rather taken aback by the sudden turn of affairs.

Within sight of Gómez Farías, without warning Daisy very suddenly locked her wheels as we were rolling along at normal speed, throwing both of us against the windshield and the rattlesnake bag onto Dave's back. "Get that damned rattlesnake off of me!" he shouted. "You and your pets!" Laughing, I tied the snake sack to the rear window curtain rod, as Dave started the motor again and, to our surprise, Daisy moved off without difficulty. The wheels locked again, however, and thereafter every few feet they would lock, as we slowly crept into town. We drove the car into a yard where we could stay until we found what was wrong. It was then about four o'clock, but we were now so proficient that we had dismantled the differential by nightfall. But nothing was wrong with it. All of the washers were intact.

In the morning we set about the longer job of getting down to the universal joint, Dave's next guess as to the source of the difficulty. True enough, the universal was broken into several pieces. We ransacked the town for another, and finally found one on an old, now useless model T.

We ate with the family in whose yard we were working. At our first meal we asked for forks and spoons to eat our soft-boiled eggs with, but they had none. Their utensils were tortillas, which they used just as skillfully as we would forks and spoons. So we did the best we could, but with exasperating clumsiness, much to the amusement of our hosts.

On the third day everything was back in its place, and again we were ready to test the remainder of Daisy's essential parts. At Monterrey we turned southward on the Pan-American Highway, stopping at Ciudad Victoria to tighten the connecting rods, which were loose and knocking loudly. We parked in a garage, and were given free rein to repair our car as we might, using their tools. While we were at it, we cleaned the pistons. In the midst of the job a tall, slender Englishman entered. We became engaged in conversation, terminating with an invitation to visit his hacienda about fifty miles away. We gladly accepted.

After collecting a day or two in the mountains west of Ciudad Victoria, we started southward to Robert Miller's Hacienda La Clementina. The connecting rods again were knocking, however, now so loudly that we feared they might crack the engine head. We pulled off the main highway a few yards onto a small side road, and after half a day Dave had tightened the rods sufficiently that we might prepare to leave. I had been amusing myself collecting nearby, as one man working on the rods was enough. I returned and was helping Dave to clear away the odds and ends of tools, when one of us inadvertently knocked over the can of oil. It was the straw of frustration that broke the camel's back of the seemingly endless trials endured on this benighted trip, resulting in a few sharp words and our first impatience with each other. The flip of a coin dictated that I should walk back to Ciudad Victoria for oil, although in a foul mood.

Once the oil was restored to the crankcase, we left once more for La Clementina. We turned to the left on a dirt road to Forlón as we reached the Río Guayalejo, then a beautiful, broad, clear river issuing directly from the mountains to the west of us. Three miles from Forlón we eventually found the hacienda, asking directions from everyone along the road. We reached there at night. Mrs. Miller came to greet us as we knocked at the door. Mr. Miller was not there, having gone a day or two before to Tampico. But we were welcomed in, and in the presence of our hostess's buoyant, cheerful personality our differences were soon forgotten.

Mr. Miller returned the following day, and for ten days we remained, thoroughly enjoying their hospitality. Miller had lived for many years in Tamaulipas, and had owned several haciendas before this. He was so well liked by local residents that, during the revolution, although haciendas all around his were burned or destroyed, the stock killed or stolen, and farmhands killed, injured or scared away, his hacienda was untouched. All of his employees were safe, all of his stock unharmed. Such a pleasant, agreeable personality was a rarity under conditions such as those to which he was subjected.

Miller's wife was an extremely attractive American woman, white-haired at a very early age. We loved to bask in her sunny presence. Her experiences, both in the United States and in Mexico, were not exceeded by those of her husband. Surrounded by such friends whom we so thoroughly liked, time passed swiftly.

One evening, as I returned from an unsuccessful attempt to catch some diminutive frogs which have a very faint, birdlike call, I stopped to talk with Mrs. Miller, elaborating upon the difficulties of capturing these elusive creatures. I told her about R. D. Camp, who had collected the first known specimens of this species nearly twenty years before near Brownsville, Texas. The species had been named for him.

"Yes," said Mrs. Miller, after my short discourse about something I had assumed was entirely new to her. "I knew Camp and was with him on some of those trips when he found those frogs."

To satisfy my curiosity, one day Miller allowed me to ride a burro alone to Forlón, near where I wanted to do some crocodile hunting. I could easily have walked the distance more quickly. The burro, although generally conceived as a docile, dumb brute which blindly obeys its master's wishes, can show great stubbornness in the hands of an inexperienced rider such as myself. My burro would occasionally stop in the middle of the road, absolutely refusing to continue. I would whip him to no avail, and finally just sat to outwait him. Eventually, on his own accord, he would start again. Whenever another burro passed, he would bray loudly, much to my discomfiture. If it were a male burro he passed, he would shy away crazily and go running down the road as though scared to death. Matters were even worse, in a different way, if the passing burro were a female.

The crocodile hunting was not notoriously successful. I did get four young ones by watching patiently from ambush, until they came to the edge of the water and could be captured by hand or net. There were numbers of large crocodiles in the pools, as evidenced by their smooth runways and sunning sites on the banks, but they were so wary that I saw none.

One day Miller, Dave and I drove to Limones, a thriving

town in the coastal plain about fifty miles south of La Clementina. The name is derived from the large citrus plantations about town. The essential industries were fruit-raising and alcohol brewing.

We stayed overnight at the home of a local resident—a genial, intelligent Chinese gentleman who had lived many years at Limones. He presented us with a small jug undoubtedly made by some prehistoric tribe, which he had found about twenty years before after a big flood. A section of the bank of a river caved in, and this jug was left projecting from the wall, about fifty feet from ground level.

While we were there the conversation turned to the new Pan-American Highway, opening up a broad area whose pristine glory was previously known only to the local Indians. The question was, why had the engineers chosen this very difficult route on the eastern coast, where there were many large rivers to bridge, and a broad, high, almost impassable mountain range to cross? It would have been much cheaper and easier merely to have improved the road south from Saltillo, where there would be no rivers to bridge and no large mountain ranges to cross. Our Chinese friend thought he had the answer. Calles, under whose regime the highway was started, owned large tracts of land at Limones. How nice it would be to have a good highway between his headquarters in Mexico City and his holdings at Limones! Regardless of the reasons for choosing that route, there is no doubt that it is a hundred times as picturesque as the route would have been through the full length of the plateau.

Much of the material we collected at La Clementina was brought to us by farmhands. The most important material we found ourselves was dug from the accumulated earth at the bottoms of four, square cement tanks sunk in the earth to ground level.

In spite of the idyllic circumstances at La Clementina, however, our money had dwindled so much that we could no longer continue the trip from there. We did not even have enough to return through El Paso, our port of entry; we had to return via Laredo. Packing for the return, our collections took up so much space that the running boards were loaded up to the windows, through which we had to crawl to get in and out. Included was a box containing a young wildcat and a young ocelot.

We stopped again on the way back at the huge spring in the mountains west of Sabinas Hidalgo where Ed and I had collected so successfully two years before. The place had changed greatly. A concrete swimming pool had been constructed near the spring, and a power plant farther downstream. The stream had been widened, and all of the numerous water snakes we had seen there earlier were missing. The place had become a resort.

On the evening of our first day there we asked the caretaker's house for some milk and meat for our wild animals. The milk was readily obtainable, but the only meat available was dried jerky. The caretaker yanked a slab of jerky from a hook on the wall, and slammed it down on the table. Dermestids and other insects flew in all directions. We bought a small piece, hoping the cats might eat it despite its toughness. They refused it, however, and had to subsist on milk.

The next morning we went into the hills to collect. When we returned late in the afternoon, a large crowd had assembled at the spring for a picnic. An orchestra was there, and numerous couples were dancing on the platform. At our appearance, a number of people came over to see our snakes, which we were glad to show. We were invited to join them in their celebrations, but we were much too disreputable looking to accept.

We eventually asked for a meal at the caretaker's home. In a few moments a bowl of soup was brought for each of us. It had a peculiar, bitter, rather spoiled taste, and upon closer inspection we saw that it had been made from the same jerky, bugs and all, that the cats had refused to eat. Dave would have none of it, so I ate both bowls. To compensate, Dave ate both portions of dessert brought for us, and we filled up on bread and onions we had in the car. The bug soup sat uneasily on my stomach for a while, but nothing serious came of it.

A few days later we crossed the Laredo border near midnight, during the latter part of August. That night we both felt feverish and nervous, but we thought little of it. We did not know it at the time, but that was the first of a series of daily episodes of chills and fever that left us extremely exhausted and which we attributed to overexposure, undereating and other effects of the irregular life we had been leading for several months.

Along with whatever illness it was that beset us, Daisy continued to act up. In northern Texas the low gear pedal started to stick. Once when we had to turn around after driving off onto a private road, Dave turned a quarter circle with the car, lifted his foot to apply the brake, but the car kept right on going, right over the side of the road, breaking through a barbed wire fence, then back around to break through the fence again, over the shoulder of the road, far over the shoulder on the other side, finally coming to rest on the road after Dave reached down and pulled the low pedal loose, steering(?) all the while. After that hair-raising experience, at the next town we had new bands put in and the low pedal checked.

Somewhere in southern Kansas the car broke down completely. We abandoned it and completed the trip by bus, arriving at Dave's home in Carbondale, where his father, a doctor, quickly diagnosed our illness as malaria. Both Dave and I had a double infection of tertian malaria, which kept recurring for a year and a half despite various types of medication. Eventually it seemed to disappear completely with atabrine. Subsequent bouts with malaria may have been new infections or recurrence of the original, but for a time we were free of it.

Thus ended our shoestring trip. We were luckier than we had any right to be to have survived it. The collection of about 1,500 specimens was small indeed compared with the results with Taylor two years earlier, with some 5,500 specimens, but we did what we could and that was that.

To be continued

Book Review: *Field Guide to Amphibians and Reptiles of Illinois* by Christopher A. Phillips, Ronald A. Brandon and Edward O. Moll 1999. Illinois Natural History Survey Manual No. 8, xiii + 282 pp. Champaign, Illinois ISBN 1-882932-04-8. Hardcover. $19.95.

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In 1961, Phillip W. Smith published *The Amphibians and Reptiles of Illinois*, which became the benchmark reference for both amateur and professional herpetologists working in the state. To this day, this oft-cited volume serves as a critically important primary data source in the literature on the herpetofauna of Illinois. However, a more current addition to the literature on Illinois amphibians and reptiles is now available. Following the highly successful format of its "Identification Manual" series, the Illinois Natural History Survey has produced a concise, small handbook to update information on the herpetofauna of Illinois.

The book's strengths are many and noteworthy. The introduction comprises sections on the biology and life history of all 102 species of Illinois amphibians and reptiles, a climatic and geologic history of the state, and a now *de rigueur* section on conservation, endangered and threatened species, collecting and collecting permits. Other currently pertinent topics discussed under separate headings include "Habitat Improvement for Amphibians and Reptiles," "Highways as Habitat for Herps" and "Declining Amphibian Populations," a specialized and timely subject of research attaining prominence in the last decade. A helpful glossary of terms precedes the identification keys, the text of which is complemented by large detailed illustrations of key characters of the state's salamanders, frogs, toads, lizards, turtles and snakes. The species accounts are in a two-page, succinct format comprising text, a photograph and a map. Text categories include Key Characters, Similar Species, Description, Habitat, Natural History, and Status, the latter two categories being particularly useful. The photographs, all color, vary from good to superior in quality.

The book has some minor flaws. Four categories of map symbols can be cumbersome and confusing. The use of yellow slanted hatch (pre-1980) and solid fill (post-1980) denoting a "verified sighting" begs the question of who is a reliable observer, a judgment at best arbitrary. The "verified sighting" category could have been eliminated entirely and would not have detracted from the maps. Also, some discrepancies between the maps and photographs depicting a species from a particular county were found; for example, the map for the plains leopard frog, *Rana blairi* (p. 127) shows a recent photograph of a specimen from Jackson County, yet the county is unmarked in the light blue shade symbol representing a photograph.

Despite the few errors, this is a superb, handy field guide and an excellent reference. I highly recommend it for lay naturalists, and amateur and professional herpetologists. As a bonus, the Illinois Natural History Survey's excellent web site has an on-line version of the *Field Guide*, and some of the map discrepancies have been rectified and further updated there. For those interested in tracking the statewide and county distributions of Illinois amphibians and reptiles through their own photographs and (permitted!) collections or salvages of road killed specimens, maps can be printed and marked by the user; thus, the *Field Guide* also encourages communication between the survey's staff and local naturalists wishing to contribute to our knowledge of the Illinois herpetofauna. Go to: <http://www.inhs.uiuc.edu/cbd/collections/herp_links/TOC.html>.

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Herps in Hollywood: *Godzilla 2000*
by John Kostka

Here it is. Finally. The long-awaited "Godzilla review," which I have been promising and not delivering for almost half a year now. But finally, I can say that I did it, and I did not lie to you. It exists. It has made it into print!

I know it's not really a reptile movie, but I just have so much fun writing these, I figured he looks scaly enough to qualify.

Godzilla 2000 is a film that most definitely will be taken two ways, from two different types of audience members. Due to this fact, it can't truly be called anything more than mediocre, though some will love it and some will hate it.

The problems or blessings of the film, depending on what kind of movie interests you, lie within the events of the story line, mostly. The film opens on a dark and rather inclement night, which immediately fills you with a sense of dread. You know there's something out there in the dark, and you begin to feel that this time, it might actually be something creepy, not just a rubber-clad Japanese actor.

Soon, Godzilla pops up (the title of the film actually shoots out of the close-up of his eye), and begins destroying a nearby village. Meanwhile, a father and his 10-year-old daughter, the two members of the "GPN" (that's Godzilla Prediction Network, which immediately ruins the mood), go after the creature, a sassy, picture-hungry reporter tagging along with them. Of course, after a brief, horrific encounter with the creature, it returns to its underwater abode.

Meanwhile, a deep-sea research company unearths an alien spaceship, covered in stone, which seems to draw its power from sunlight. Soon, the vicious vehicle is flying throughout Japan, terrifying civilians in between battles with Godzilla himself. Expectedly, later in the film, our scaly friend has a grudge to bear, and, once again, saves our dear Japan.

Of course, from this description, you may be wondering to yourself, "Haven't I seen this already?" That is *Godzilla 2000*'s major flaw. The "2000" in the title leads us to assume that this is going to be quite a film, the likes of which will only come along once in a millennium. Wrong. *Godzilla 2000* is almost the same as many of the Godzilla films that preceded it. This is what one set of practical fans will dislike about it.

Another set, however, the fans of B-movies and the like, will be having a wonderful experience, because *Godzilla 2000* is truly a '50s movie for the new millennium. Never mind the fact that they've seen it all before, these people will eat it up. The film is rather exquisite in its strangeness. For instance, the filmmakers have decided, for some reason, to stay with the "man in the rubber suit" method to animate the titular menace. This makes the creature as hilarious as it ever was, possibly even more so, seeing as it is mixed in with, at times, rather competently done digital technology. Maybe the filmmakers decided that it would be better to stick with the basics, after viewing the dismal American *Godzilla* of only a few years ago.

Schlock fans will also embrace the welcome "Godzilla tradition" which they have come to expect from these foreign imports—the horrendous dubbing. It seems as though the ones doing the dubbing were not even trying to sync the lips to the dialogue, and, as a result, characters move their mouths a little sometime before speaking, and, on occasion, will begin speaking before they've even opened their mouths.

There are some sad attempts at comic relief thrown in, such as when the reporter is asking directions from two bumbling workers at a dock, and the one instructs her while accidentally and repeatedly bludgeoning his friend with the pole that he is holding for some reason. It's scenes like these, which play like misplaced, poorly done Japanese Three Stooges gags, that throw the film completely off. The audience doesn't know what to think. The rest of this is being played in such a dead serious tone. Is it a campy throwback to the fun Godzilla movies of the '50s, or is this just a bit of comedy, and are we to be taking the rest of this film seriously?

The movie also loses itself at about the hour mark. We realize that the film is focusing a bit too much on Godzilla's nemesis, the flying saucer, and not enough on Godzilla himself. The movie takes so much time explaining everything that by the time we do finally get to see the apocalyptic final battle, we are beyond the point of caring any more. In a film like this, depriving the audience of what it paid for is as ludicrous as believing that a "2000" tacked on the end of a title makes a good movie (if course, both of these ideas have been implemented in many movies, so what does that tell you?).

I cannot say whether I liked or disliked *Godzilla 2000*, nor can I say whether others will. Some moments of the film are campy and fun, while others drag on endlessly as characters prattle on and on, their movement of their lips not even matching the words that they're speaking.

Godzilla 2000 is not for all tastes. Basically, if you like cheesy '50s sci-fi cinema, you will enjoy this. If you don't, you won't.

When all is said and done, some aspects of the film may bore all viewers, and some aspects will prove hilarious and amusing to some, but, in my opinion, a film with a line like, "Perhaps, there is a little Godzilla in us all," isn't all bad.

Columbia Tristar in association with the Toho Film Company, Ltd., 2000, 99 min.

MPAA rating: PG for mild violence and mild language

NEW RELEASE

January 16—Python

By the time you read this, Python *will already be available. I did my best to get a copy, but all I found was that going to a poorly stocked video store can be trying on one's patience (as well as one's writing career). I will do my absolute best to get a review ready for next issue, but, as I have learned from* Godzilla 2000*, I'm not making any promises.*

COMING SOON

As stated in previous articles, Crocodile II: Death Roll *is already in production, slated to be filmed in India. The release date of* Blood Surfer *(about Saltwater crocodiles Down Under) is unsure at this time, but from what I hear the film has been shot. Sam Neill will star in* Jurassic Park III*, the promotional posters of which are already beginning to appear in cinema lobbies (at least in the theaters I go to). Nothing has been said recently about the U.S. release of the Japanese films* Gamera 2 & 3*, so I'll keep quiet from now until I hear some more recent information.* Reptilicus 2 *(the first concerned a reptile monster generated from a dinosaur limb—who knows what this will have in store!) is reportedly being planned, almost forty years after the release of the original, though details are sketchy. On the serpentine front,* Komodo *and* Anaconda *scriptwriter Hans Bauer is planning another script entitled* Snake*, concerning a giant python escaped from a carnival sideshow(!) terrorizing a family trapped in their rural Iowa farmhouse. He's thinking of trying one more giant reptile script after that (I'm of the opinion that no matter how many times he tries he's not going to get it right), but so far (luckily) nothing has been written.*

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HerPET-POURRI

by Ellin Beltz

D-Day in the Pacific

• Hawaii officials are anxiously seeking what appears to be a 5-foot-long black rat snake, known to be on the island because pieces of its shed were found by hotel employees on Kauai. Wildlife officials point out that while the snake is harmless to humans, it could be fatal for some of Kauai's endemic species. In the state of Hawaii, keeping any kind of snake may result in up to three years in jail and up to $200,000 fine. State officials point out what has happened on Guam, where brown tree snakes have caused ecological havoc and financial losses for the inhabitants—both native and human. [Honolulu *Star-Bulletin*, December 20, 2000, from Ms. G. E. Chow] The banner on the same paper, December 30, points out that it was a Hawaiian artist who designed the 2001 "Year of the Snake" 33-cent stamp—now rendered effectively extinct by the postal rate increase.

• A small, venomous snake—native to Australia's east coast—was found in a shipping container of used car batteries near Wellington, New Zealand. It was killed. Three other snakes were found on snake-free New Zealand in 2000. A spokesman for the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of New Zealand said that shipping "containers are a biosecurity nightmare. They provide a safe, secure environment for the distribution of alien species around the planet." Most of the pest species on New Zealand have been introduced. The worst are reportedly North American opossums, which "destroy vast tracts of native forest every year," according to Reuters. [September 7, 2000, from Catherine Johnson]

• Residents of Hawaii's Big Island aren't sleeping very well any more since their area has been invaded by noisy Caribbean frogs which arrived in shipments of agricultural goods or potted plants. Their call is a 90- to 100-decibel chirp that rivals a table saw, lawnmower or helicopter for "noisiness," according to researchers at the University of Hawaii. At home in the Caribbean, predators keep them from overpopulation, but in some places in Hawaii the frogs, of the genus *Eleutherodactylus*, reach over 8,000 per acre. They compete with native birds and wildlife for food, consuming up to 46,000 insects per acre per night. The frogs have lowered property values, caused people's health to decline from not sleeping and may be nearly impossible to eradicate. [*Miami Herald*, December 29, 2000, from Alan Rigerman] For more about alien frogs in Hawai'i follow the link on my website <http://www.neiu.edu/~ebeltz> and click on "Hawaii field trip 2000."

Turtle tales

• Cold weather in Florida cooled sea water and sent more than 200 turtles ashore on Florida's Gulf Coast beaches. Many were juveniles overcome by the cold while feeding off shore. Greens, hawksbills and loggerheads were stranded by "cold stun." One green sea turtle died from exposure; many more were hydrated, warmed and dosed with antibiotics. A spokesman for the Clearwater Marine Aquarium said, "if they get cold stun, they don't eat. They basically look deceased and don't move very much." Meanwhile, tourists from Chicago found cold stunned hatchling turtles on the Boca Raton beach and stranding center workers found a few more tangled up in tree roots while trying to get out of the nest. Curiously, these have upper shells that look like hawksbills, but the bottoms look more like loggerhead sea turtles, suggesting these may be intergrades. It is also unusual to find baby sea turtles on the beach in December. [*Miami Herald* and *Sun-Sentinel*, January 5, 2001, from Alan Rigerman]

• The number of green sea turtle nests in Brevard County, Florida, broke all previous records. In 2000, a very exact 2,396 nest were counted; a 45 percent increase over 1999. Worldwide, the green sea turtle has not been doing so well, declines have been reported in Australia, Indonesia, Africa and the Mediterranean. And in the Caribbean green sea turtles number only 5 percent of what they did in 1492 when Columbus arrived, according to Karen Bjorndal at the University of Florida's Archie Carr Center for Sea Turtle Research. [*Miami Herald,* December 4, 2000, from Alan Rigerman]

• Meanwhile, the Turtle Hospital in Marathon reports that 11 loggerheads have been brought in the past six weeks with a mysterious virus that leaves them unable to eat or blink. More turtles with similar symptoms have been found around the Florida Keys, while others have been seen in the ocean but not taken by passing boaters. Rescuers are feeding the turtles "squid milk shake" and providing heat. The turtles lie gasping noises and looking pitiful. Workers say they've never seen anything like it—but that it may be a strain of the herpes virus. [*San Francisco Chronicle*, December 25, 2000, from Bradford Norman]

More electricity, more growth, more development

"Muffled by the roar of falling water and bathed in a steady mist, the rare Kihansi spray toad thrived high in a blissfully isolated gorge. But its discovery has brought turmoil for environmentalists, World Bank officials and electricity-starved Tanzanians. Nearby villagers believe that the unique, thumbnail-size toad has magic powers and that their future is directly tied to the toad, . . . *Nectophrynoides asperginus*," according to the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* [January 15, 2001]. The problem is an internationally funded hydroelectric dam which may wipe out the remaining 11,500 toads of this species. However zoos have bred them in captivity and this may help save the species. Before the dam, the Kihansi River crashed over an escarpment, sending up huge plumes of mist which provided the moisture for the lime-colored toads to flourish, unknown and unplanned-for by the great outside world. The species gives live birth and was discovered during an environmental assessment for the dam in 1996. A local man said that the toads are "most likely the spirits of the river, and some disaster may befall this area and the river itself if they are somehow wiped out!" Contributor Vicky Elwood wrote "It's not the same without the *Vivarium* . . . I joined CHS to keep up on the oddball things going on. Keep up the good job!"

Gators, gators everywhere

• One lane of the highway in Fort Lauderdale was shut when a trailer carrying 10,000 pounds of alligator carcasses to a processing plant overturned. [*Daily Commercial*, Leesburg, Florida, October 5, 2000, from Bill Burnett]

• "A 10-foot alligator stuck in a concrete drainage pipe for weeks and nicknamed "Drano" by people who fed it was rescued . . . by a trapper. . . . [It will] get a new life at an Everglades wildlife park in western Broward County [Florida]." This arrangement was due to the intervention of an animal rights group because usually gators over four feet long are not relocated. [*Ocala Star-Banner*, December 30, 2000, from Alan Rigerman]

• An 8-foot alligator stopped traffic for a couple of hours before Pulaski County, Arkansas, sheriff's deputies could move it to the side of the road. [*Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, September 29, 2000, from Bill Burnett]

• The first Arkansas status and distribution work on alligators has begun. The state stocked the southern half of the state with about 2,800 small gators from 1972 to 1984 in an effort to protect an endangered species. And while large ones have been blocking traffic and causing accidents in the state, no one really knows how many are out there. [*Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, October 1, 2000, from Bill Burnett]

Soft 'n' Scaly?

What appears to be a garter snake was found sealed up inside a four pack of Soft 'n' Gentle toilet paper shipped to a Thornville, Ohio, store and bought by a woman who was less than amused when she saw its lidless gaze looking back at her in her bathroom. The manufacturer contacted a pest control agency which picked up the package and was preparing it to send back for inspection. Company officials said that their processes are very automated and very fast and they have no idea how a snake could have been sealed in their package. The store owner in Ohio said the material was never left outside even for an instant and so he has no idea how the snake could have gotten in there and the lady who found it said that since she has four cats there is no way that the snake could have gotten in there. So, the snake either couldn't have gotten in there in which case there was no snake in the four pack—or there was a snake in the four pack, but there was no way it could have gotten in there. [Bucyrus OH *Telegraph-Forum*, September 20, 2000, from Bill Burnett] This is what they call the Heisenberg Uncertain Snake Principle. You can also tell that the toilet paper company is not run by herpetologists. They'd have just gone out and slapped "free in certain packages—one garter snake" stickers on all the remaining stock!

Amphibia, amphibiae

• "Homeowners use up to 10 times more chemical pesticides per acre on their lawns than farmers use on crops. We can all help by choosing non-chemical weed controls whenever possible, minimizing our use of fertilizer and reducing our dependence on pesticides. If we all take these actions, we will not only be helping amphibians, but we will be taking care of our watersheds and other species like birds and fish as well." Jamie Rappaport Clark, Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service said while kicking off a study of 43 refuges in 31 states which will focus on the impact of pollutants on amphibians. [*Fish and Wildlife News*, July/Aug, 2000, from J. N. Stuart]

• "Agricultural pesticides are disrupting the nervous system of frogs in Yosemite National Park and elsewhere in the Sierra Nevada. . . . Commonly used pesticides suppress an enzyme in frogs that controls the nerve system. . . . Because of California's prevailing winds, farm chemicals sprayed in the San Joaquin Valley blow . . . directly toward the mountains." [*Honolulu Advertiser*, December 10, 2000, from Ms. G. E. Chow]

• However, other researchers point out that all amphibian declines are unlikely to all have the exact same cause. Declines and deformities have been linked to nematodes, diseases, ultraviolet radiation and global warming. [*Tacoma News Tribune*, December 8, 2000, from Marty Marcus]

• Dublin, California, "city officials are upset with a federal agency's proposal to designate the entire city as part of critical habitat for the California red-legged frog. . . . Such a habitat designation would mean that if government funds are involved in a development project, those agencies would have to consult with federal wildlife officials before ground could be broken. . . . Private property owners deemed to have ownership of critical habitat land would not have to relinquish control of the space, but would be prohibited from engaging in unauthorized activities that would harm the red-legged frog. [*San Luis Obispo Tribune*, October 9, 2000, from Sean McKeown]

Hot stuff

Researchers studying snake imaging with their infrared pits routinely "blindfold" their subjects by covering their eye scales with little pieces of tape. The research is intended to help the Air Force develop smaller and more efficient infrared vision. The best sensors right now see hot large objects, like tanks. Snakes usually image small stuff, like rats and mice. So researchers think that the snakes' imaging is about 10 times better than anything we use so far. Another thing they have learned is that snakes switch seamlessly back and forth. If their eyes are covered, the pits turn on and vice versa. When neither is covered, both are used. Another possible application of this work is imaging cancers and tumors in people by being able to see minute temperature differences due to the greater blood flow to the tumors. [*Orlando Sentinel*, July 23, 2000, from Alan Rigerman]

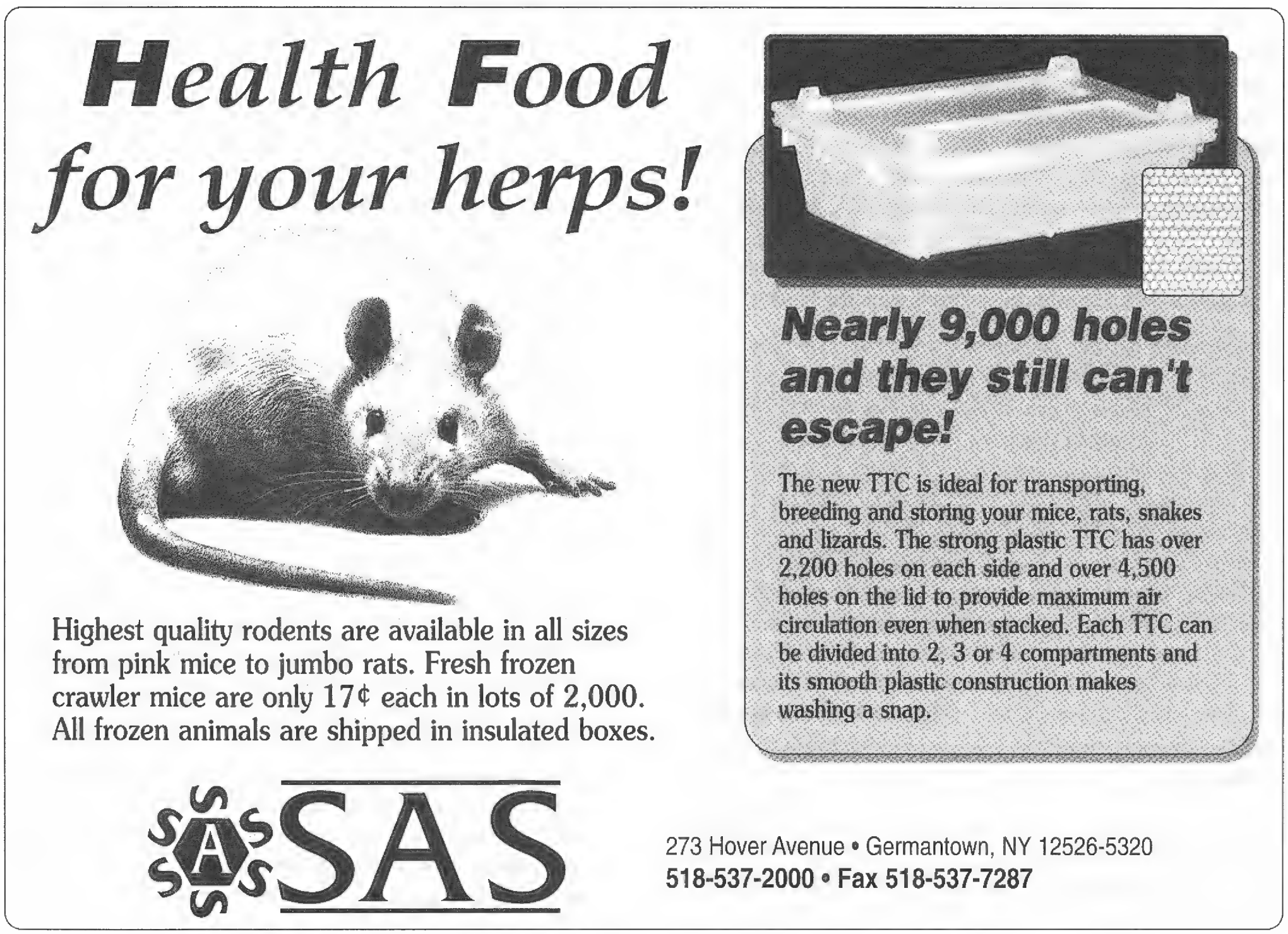
It's not easy being green

"Lacking the soulful eyes of a golden retriever or the fuzzy warmth of a kitten is no reason an iguana should go homeless," in the opinion of a Wauconda, Illinois, man who hopes to turn his Reptile Rescuers group into a not-for-profit. He says that the new low prices on baby iguanas are turning them into disposable pets. Few buyers of the cute little green things realize that they have taken on a 15-year, 6-foot-long commit-

ment which may or may not have an attitude. Visit their no-kill shelter online at <http://www.reptilerescuers.com>. [*Chicago Tribune*, January 11, 2001, from Lori King]

People who type a lot
The Field Museum Herpetology Collection is now online. Visit <http://www.fmnh.org/herps/> to read about any of the approximately 265,000 specimens in the collection. [*Froglog*, December 2000]

Thanks to everyone who contributed this month and to Marty Marcus, Esther Sabin, Joanna, Alan Rigerman, B. R. Norman and D. L. Dodd for articles and stuff I haven't written about yet—or couldn't figure out how to write about yet! But the clipping file is thin right now, so don't delay. Send clippings to: Ellin Beltz, 1647 N. Clybourn Avenue, Chicago, IL 60614-5507. Make sure your name is on each piece (those little freebie labels are great for this task) and that the date/publication slug is attached, visible or in some way around so I can give the proper journal credit. Please fold a minimum number of times. Some of my contributors use those big 9 × 11 inch envelopes which makes it really easy to do my monthly origami. E-mail letters and comments to <ebeltz@ripco.com>. And check out my translations of the reptiles and amphibians scientific names at <http://www.neiu.edu/~ebeltz/herps/etyhome.html>.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Herpetology 2001

In this column the editorial staff presents short abstracts of herpetological articles we have found of interest. This is not an attempt to summarize all of the research papers being published; it is an attempt to increase the reader's awareness of what herpetologists have been doing and publishing. The editor assumes full responsibility for any errors or misleading statements.

A NEW *UROMASTYX* SPECIES

T. Wilms and W. Böhme [2000, Herpetozoa 13(3/4):133-148] provide an overview of the taxonomy of the *Uromastyx aegyptia* group and discuss the taxonomic rank of the taxa *aegyptia* and *microlepis*. They designate a neotype for *aegyptia* and a lectotype for *microlepis*. They describe a new species, *Uromastyx leptieni* from southeastern Arabia. *U. leptieni* inhabits northern Oman and the eastern parts of the United Arab Emirates. It is distinguished from its sister taxon *U. aegyptia* by larger ventral scales and a different juvenile color pattern. The new species is named in honor of the collector of the holotype, Mr. Rolf Leptien.

NEONATOLOGY OF REPTILES

D. J. Morafka et al. [2000, Herpetological Monographs 14: 353-370] here define neonatal reptiles as an age class of young eureptilian amniotes (excluding birds) that express attributes most influenced by the preparative development environinent (oviduct, egg and nest) and by the demands of parition and first dispersal. Neonatal character states are typically transformed, reduced or eliminated during the first 10% of their prereproductive development. Traditionally, neonates have not been distinguished from juvenile reptiles. As a result the neonatology of reptiles has rarely been addressed in past literature. Recent studies reveal a complex array of developmental scenarios involving character state transformations, heterochrony, unique character states in morphology, behavior, physiology, nutrition, dispersion and health. Unique morphological features (such as egg teeth) and limited skeletal ossification characterize many neonates. Distinguishing behaviors include "reversal" movements, utilization of bright color patterns, and startling movements. Prolonged association with protective parents, group migration, unique agonistic behavior, and tendencies toward rapid dispersion characterize the neonates of individual species. Neonatal physiological attributes include: a special availability to inoculation by symbiont fermenting anaerobes in herbivores, rapid conforming responses to their external environments in thermal and hydric exchanges, and in the case of some turtles, extraordinary capacities for supercooling. Post-paritive lecithotrophy (nutrition from residual yolk) sustain both the overwintering of nestlings and the dispersion of nonfeeding young for as long as several months. Resistance to infections (such as mycoplasmas) from their maternal parents, combine with nutritive reserves of residual yolk and a common tendency for rapid dispersion to make neonates attractive candidates for augmentation and translocation programs. Coupled with the practical advantages of maintaining and manipulating small animals in a laboratory, these qualities distinguish neonates as particularly useful models for experimentally evaluating the relative apportionment of reproductive resources into greater numbers of offspring or into improved quality/survivorship of individuals.

HUNGARIAN MEADOW VIPERS

B. Újvári et al. [2000, Amphibia–Reptilia 21(3):267-278] measured 79 specimens of the Hungarian meadow viper, *Vipera ursinii rakosiensis*, in the field during a continuous population study between 1993 and 1997. Body length and body mass of six juveniles were compared to those of 43 other specimens that were kept in terraria during their first winter. Significant differences were found in favor of the juveniles kept in captivity. Furthermore, a comparison with earlier data from 1953 showed a strong decline in juvenile body mass. Based on body size, three age classes could be distinguished in the study population. The annual activity and reproductive cycle of the Hungarian meadow viper is described for the first time. A comparison to other European populations of Orsini's viper revealed a remarkably higher clutch size in *Vipera ursinii rakosiensis*, which is explained by the larger body size of females in the particular population.

FREEZE TOLERANCE IN THE PACIFIC TREEFROG

S. A. Croes and R. E. Thomas [2000, Copeia (3):863-868] examined freeze tolerance and cryoprotectant synthesis in the Pacific treefrog, *Hyla regilla*, collected from Northern California in the spring and fall. Specimens frozen at 2°C for six and 12 hours had a survival rate of 10% and 80%, respectively, in both seasons. This is the first report of freeze tolerance for *H. regilla*. Freezing caused a fivefold increase in plasma glucose levels in the spring and a 14-fold increase in the fall. Ice formation induced a rise in liver glucose and glycerol production in both seasons with concentrations of liver glucose being greater in the fall than in the spring. The increase in glucose was accompanied by a significant decline in liver glycogen. Seasonal differences in muscle glycogen levels in response to freezing were not shown, suggesting that the liver is responsible for cryoprotectant synthesis. The rise in plasma glucose, along with increased levels of liver glucose and glycerol in response to freezing, suggests that these compounds are being used as cryoprotectants, with glucose the primary component.

SNAKE MITE CONTROL

E. J. Wozniak and D. F. DeNardo [2000, J. Herpetological Medicine and Surgery 10(3&4):4-10] note that the common snake mite, *Ophionyssus natricis* (Parasitiformes: Macronyssidae), is a blood feeding, mesostigmatid mite that parasitizes reptiles. Anemia, dehydration, dermatitis, and several bloodborne infectious diseases have been linked to infestations. Severe pruritic dermatitis has been reported in humans bitten by *Ophionyssus natricis*. All levels of *Ophionyssus natricis* infestation should be considered a serious problem worthy of prompt treatment. The authors describe the general morphology, biology and behavior of each life stage and discuss the components of an integrated control and prevention program for the maintenance of mite-free snake collections.

ECOLOGY OF THE LAND MULLET

A. Klingenböck et al. [2000, Copeia (4):931-939] note that land mullets (*Egernia major*, Scincidae) are large (60 cm total length), powerful glossy black lizards that are restricted to rain forest and associated habitats in southeastern Australia. The authors conducted the first ecological study of these spectacular animals to evaluate the degree to which anthropogenic activities might threaten population viability. Twelve adult lizards were captured in the Barrington Tops area of eastern New South Wales and implanted with miniature temperature-sensitive radiotransmitters. The lizards were released at their sites of capture and located daily for the next six weeks. In conjunction with surveys of surrounding areas, the data document strong patterns in habitat selection at various spatial scales. The lizards are most abundant in ecotonal forest rather than in either dense rain forest or more open eucalypt-dominated areas. They are most abundant in areas with high numbers of large fallen logs and spend most of their time in or near these logs. Radio-tracked animals were generally located close to clearings (including roads) but actively avoided crossing roads. Land mullets are diurnal heliotherms, basking for long periods each day to achieve body temperatures around 30°C. Their black color increases heating rate, and their large size retards cooling, thus facilitating retention of high temperatures. as they forage in cool forest habitats. The animals' ability to take advantage of anthropogenic disturbance (partial clearing of vegetation) suggests that *E. major* populations are likely to be viable as long as suitable habitat (especially large fallen timber) is available.

REPRODUCTION IN A PUERTO RICAN FROG

P. A. Burrowes [2000, Herpetologica 56(3):375-386] studied the reproductive biology of *Eleutherodactylus cooki* in a cave system in San Lorenzo, Puerto Rico. Frequency of multiple clutches in nests, clutch size, nest site locations, reproductive timing, embryonic development, and hatching success were studied from September 1995 to December 1996. Males guarded multiple clutches of eggs from up to four different females at a time. The mean clutch size was 17.35 eggs per clutch, and the difference in developmental timing among multiple clutches was between 4 and 14 days. The fitness benefit of parental care was examined experimentally in the field. Compared to control clutches (males not removed), experimental clutches had significantly lower hatching success. Paternal care offers a significant fitness value through increased hatching success at virtually no cost to males in terms of energy expenditure or missed opportunities to mate. An evaluation of the differential reproductive effort, parental investment, and potential reproductive rate between sexes, considering the operational sex ratio, suggests that sexual selection acts on males in this species. The author suggests that mechanisms of sexual selection are female choice and intrasexual exploitative competition. Males with the greatest reproductive success had more yellow coloration than average in the ventral region and guarded at least one clutch of eggs in recessed surfaces of rock, suggesting that visual cues are important in mate choice. Females were scarce and had higher parental investment, and a lower potential reproductive rate than males. Hence, they represent a resource for which males compete.

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Unofficial Minutes of the CHS Board Meeting, January 19, 2001

The meeting was called to order at 7:32 P.M. Board member Rich Crowley was absent.

Officers' Reports

Recording Secretary: Emily Forcade read the minutes of the December meeting. Corrections were made and the minutes were accepted.

Treasurer: Gary Fogel distributed the treasurer's report for December 2000. He also distributed a summary of income and expenses since 1993. We lost c. $9,000 for the year 2000; but over the last seven years there was an average surplus of $1,692 each year. All the records have been given to Greg Brim. Greg reported that the money has been transferred to the Harris Bank into checking and money market accounts. Jack said that the IRS has responded to our appeal and refunded c. $490 of the penalty we paid for late filing. They kindly included interest on the payment we made when the penalty was assessed.

Membership Secretary: Mike Dloogatch distributed the membership report for January 2001. He will continue to include membership counts for the previous eleven months in each of the monthly reports. Our current membership remains at 808.

Vice-President: Lori King said that the April speaker would be Peter Pritchard. The March speaker has not yet been scheduled. The Rattlesnake Roundup program remains status quo. We are waiting for more auction items to be donated. A Utila Iguana Adoptions Program is being started, but there is a desperate need for a digital camera.

Corresponding Secretary: Steve Spitzer reported that the message tape on the CHS phone line has been divided into several message lines: one for general information about the organization and specific information about the upcoming general meeting, one for shows and special events and one for adoptions and animal questions.

Publications Secretary: Mike Redmer has asked Chris Lechowicz to install a counter to check the traffic on our website. Char Haguewood said she knows methods to get counters without cost. Mike said that he was approached by a dot com seller of reptile food. They offered to give us a percentage of the sales generated on line with the help of our website in return for displaying their banner on the site. Mike made inquiries about the company. They are reputable. He asked for feedback from the group. Mike Dloogatch thought that as long as they are providing a service to our members and creating revenue for us, it was a good idea. Dan Bavirsha said that when Mike is considering such an offer, he would like to continue to have a short synopsis presented to the board before a final decision was made. Mike Redmer agreed. Steve Spitzer said that Mike should be able to decide this without necessarily bringing it to the board, but he would prefer not to have our home page covered with banners. Bob Bavirsha said that he would prefer to look at the offers for the next few months at the board meetings. The group agreed that this was not a matter of trust of Mike's decisions, but that we were in uncharted territory, as Ron Humbert stated. Lori King asked Mike Dloogatch what his policy was regarding advertisers in the *Bulletin*. He said that he accepts no display ads from pet stores, nor any other display ads for herps unless "captive-bred" is specified. Jack said that it seemed that the group believed that links and ads are acceptable on the website. As a board we might want the publications secretary to exercise his own good judgment. Jack suggested that Mike make the decisions as long as no contract is involved. He could then bring them to the board to discuss and also if problems arise. The group agreed. Mike was comfortable with this as well. Mike asked that any messages regarding publications be sent to chspublications@aol.com.

Standing Committees

Grants: Lori King, Mike Redmer and Mike Dloogatch will serve on the Grants Committee. One grant application has already come in.

Shows: Jenny Vollman asked anyone interested in exhibiting or taking care of our booth at the Chicagoland Family Pet Show (March 16–18), to contact her. Linda Malawy will be there all three days. Gary will do two days. Char offered to do Friday the 16th. Jenny will get more details about a show at the Field Museum sponsored by Chicago Wilderness April 7–10. Steve Spitzer said that several members told him they felt left out when they didn't hear about the CHS exhibit at the CAS on Corporate Family Day. Jenny said that for the Arlington Show she tries to include some snakes, lizards and turtles, but the space is limited. The committee to establish guidelines for exhibitors hasn't met yet.

Raffle: Gary Kostka reported that all of the free subscriptions donated by *Reptiles* magazine have been redeemed and they will be sending more. If anyone wants to donate more tanks, additional storage space will be required, since Gary has no more room for them. Perhaps people who are donating them can keep them until the general meeting.

Library: Jack said that Jeff Janovetz would soon have the library contents on lists to bring to the general meetings.

Adoptions: Linda Malawy said that some of the organizations that are called about animals people wish to put up for adoption (e.g., zoos) don't know the correct contact person for the CHS. An issue came up recently with Brookfield Zoo that illustrated this. Linda will take steps to correct this.

ReptileFest: Darin Croft reported that designated volunteers are covering all aspects of ReptileFest. He expressed his appreciation and thanks for their fine efforts. The following people are in charge of the following task groups. Anyone who wishes to be involved in any of these areas is encouraged to contact them or him directly. The leaders are: David Bardack – UIC relations, campus PR; Karen Bielski – food, tablecloth donations; Betsy Davis – press releases, speakers; Rob Carmichael – Boy Scouts PR; Rich Crowley – facilities planning; Nick d'Andrea – relief workers; Mike Dloogatch – flyers, *Bulletin* articles; Gary Fogel – floor plan; Char Haguewood – signage, tours; Bob Herman – vendor solicitation; Ron Humbert – exhibitors; Jeff Janovetz – natural history labels; Lori King – media PR; Joan Moore – exhibitors, other organizations; Paul Rodriguez – Internet PR, hand cleaner donations, PetCo & PetSmart PR; Steve Spitzer – insurance; Jenny Vollman – vendors; Don Wheeler – flyer design; Lisa Yerian – coupon postcards, PR.

Darin said that the only item pending is signing the contract, which has been written and faxed to him. He reported that an ad will appear in *Reptiles* magazine. Darin and Lisa Yerian have written an article about the 'Fest and submitted it to *Chicago Parent* magazine for consideration. The next planning meeting will be held at Darin's home on January 28 at 2 P.M. Steve Spitzer asked if Turtle Club members who are not CHS members could be exhibitors. The Turtle Club as a whole has an affiliate membership. The group strongly agreed that they should be able to. This led to a discussion about other groups who may request to participate. The group agreed that other groups might exhibit on the approval of the coordinator pending the approval of our insurer, which Steve will check as it comes up. Darin said that since the board cannot effectively consider Rob Carmichael's request for permission to exhibit venomous reptiles unless he comes to a board meeting to discuss this, there would be no venomous reptiles exhibited this year at the 'Fest.

Ad Hoc Committees

CAS: Jack said that we have approval to have the April 25 general meeting at the CAS. The new CEO is reviewing all the programs and activities that take place, so they are only able to book our meetings on a month-by-month basis. Mike Dloogatch suggested we take a proactive stance regarding our relationship with them. There are people on the CAS board of directors who know us and like us. They might not be aware that we're having a problem with the meeting arrangements as well as with other aspects of our CAS relationship. If we could get an audience with the board and make an excellent presentation, this could make a big difference. Lori King said that we should look for articles that indicate that our shows have boosted their attendance. Mike may have some and Ellin Beltz may also have some in her extensive files of articles sent to her for her *Bulletin* column. Jack mentioned that the Education Director is to contact him. He will try to get the CAS to publicize the Peter Pritchard presentation under our name, since he is well known.

Awards: Jack thanked Greg Brim for the committee's work on the awards. They were very nice looking. Greg said that he gave Dan Bavirsha all the information related to the functions of the awards committee.

Trips: Char Haguewood will try to arrange a trip to the Toledo Zoo for either May 5 or 12. No one in the group had problems with either date.

Salamander Safari: The event will take place on March 31 from 8:30 A.M. to 2 P.M. at Camp Sagawau. Ron Humbert asked for volunteers to bring some live or previously live amphibians to show to the group that day. He would like to know what's being brought as soon as possible so this can be mentioned in the *Bulletin*. Ari Hermann wrote to Chicago Wilderness to ask if they would be interested in a photo article about the Safari. They are interested and we would like to provide him with guidance. There are several people who regularly come who have experience in wildlife photography.

Symposium 2001: Char reported on the recent planning meeting. Requests for refunds will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Jenny Vollman will tell vendors that if they exhibit at the 'Fest and at the Symposium, they will get $20 off the table price. Joan Moore will come up with rules for breeders' exhibits. We also need to recruit a few veterinarians to inspect animals at the breeders' sale.

Old Business

Chicago Wilderness Network: Chicago Wilderness sent Char a questionnaire with some specific questions about specific people in the CHS responsible for certain activities. The group helped her answer these questions. If there are requests for proposals for the current round of grants, the application deadline is March 15.

Credit Cards: Jack investigated Telecharge but the costs are prohibitive. We will attempt to enlist a private person who already has a credit card system to use for the Symposium.

General Meetings Format: As sergeant-at-arms, Dan Bavirsha will now be in charge of name tags. Jack asked for feedback about the shorter business section at the last meeting and the 20-minute break. The group liked this. Jack suggested that instead of individuals coming up to make announcements, it's faster if the person chairing the meeting makes all announcements. The group supported this.

New Business

Mike Dloogatch read a series of E-mails he exchanged with Rob Carmichael about what Rob thought was misinformation on our website about the Dangerous Animals Act. Mike disagreed and they each had reasons to support their conclusions. The decision was to leave the website info regarding this unchanged. Rob also asked that we take a proactive stance in providing the public info regarding handling of large reptiles. He also suggested we have a policy about how large reptiles should be displayed. Dan Bavirsha suggested putting care and captivity info on the website after it's updated. There were mixed feelings about the feasibility of doing this. For now, no action on this will be taken, but it will remain under consideration.

Ideas and Suggestions

Lori would like to get a small group together to focus on publicity to increase our visibility.

Linda Malawy suggested putting up a bulletin board at the general meetings for announcements of, for example, upcoming events. Mike Dloogatch said this had been tried in the past with little success. There are problems with keeping track of the board. Jack said the idea was worth further consideration.

Round Table

Gary Fogel reported that his article on sungazers will be reprinted in *Notes from NOAH*.

Emily Forcade asked if we were going to be notified about training sessions for the amphibian survey. Mike Dloogatch said these are being publicized in the January *Bulletin*.

Char said the Chicago Environmental Network has accepted us, but we haven't received official notification. We are listed on their website.

The meeting adjourned at 9:43 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by Recording Secretary Emily Forcade

Advertisements

For sale: Frozen rodents now available at the General Meeting! Just another good reason to come to the meetings at the Chicago Academy of Sciences Patty Notebaert Nature Museum. Assorted sizes of rats and mice. Call Rich Crowley at (708) 485-5705 for details and pricing.

For sale: rats and mice—pinkies, fuzzies and adults. Quantity discounts. Please send a SASE for pricelist or call Bill Brant, *THE GOURMET RODENT*, 6115 SW 137th Avenue, Archer FL 32618, (352) 495-9024, E-mail: GrmtRodent@aol.com.

For sale: murine-pathogen-free rats and mice available in all sizes, live or frozen: pinkies, fuzzies, crawlers, small, medium and large. Frozen crawler mice in lots of 2000, $.17 each. Also available, full grown hairless mice. FOB shipping point. Master Card accepted. Call (518) 537-2000 between 8:00 A.M. and 5:00 P.M. or write SAS Corporation, 273 Hover Avenue, Germantown NY 12526 for prices and additional information.

For sale: from **The Mouse Factory**, producing superior quality, frozen feeder mice and rats. We feed our colony a nutrtionally balanced diet of rodent chow, formulated especially for us, and four types of natural whole grains and seeds. Mice starting from: pinks, $.17 each; fuzzies, $.24 each; hoppers, $.30 each; weanling, $.42; adult, $.48. Rats: starting with pinks at $.45 each, to XL at $1.80 each. Discount prices available. We accept Visa, MC, Discover or money orders. P.O. Box 85, Alpine TX 79831. Call us **toll-free** at (800) 720-0076 or visit our website: http://www.themousefactory.com.

For sale: from Bayou Rodents, excellent quality feeder mice and rats. Every size available. Pinks starting at $20/100. Orders are shipped by overnight service Monday thru Thursday. We accept Visa, MasterCard and Discover. For more info, contact Rhonda or Peggy, (800) 722-6102.

For sale: **high quality frozen feeders**. Over a decade of production and supply. Seven sizes of mice availabe: small newborn pinks up to jumbo adults. Prices start at $25 per 100. Feeders are separate in the resealable bag, not frozen together. Low shipping rates. Free price list. Kelly Haller, 4236 SE 25th Street, Topeka KS 66605, (913) 234-3358 evenings and weekends.

For sale: *Restoring the Tortoise Dynasty: The Decline and Recovery of the Galapagos Giant Tortoise* by Godfrey Merlen (1999). Great review of the Galapagos Tortoise Restoration project, color and b/w photos and illustrations, 56 pp,. paperback, $20 postpaid (within the U.S. and Canada). Also, two new 30 pp. books by Darren Green: *Keeping Long-necked Turtles:* Chelodina *Species* and *Keeping Short-necked Turtles:* Emydura *Species*, b/w illustrations, paperback, $14 each or $22 for two-book set postpaid (within the U.S. and Canada). Check or M.O. payable to NorthStar Herpetological, P.O. Box 389, Lanesboro, MN 55949-0389. PayPal online payments also accepted. For a complete list of new and used books on turtles send $1.00 (to help offset printing and postage costs) to the address above or forward your E-mail address to emys@means.net.

For sale: herp books. *Turtles of South America* by Marcos Freiberg, 1981, 125 pp., many color and b&w photos, plastic covers, inscribed by author, $55; *Turtle Lore* by Gale Koschmann, 1965, 60 pp., color photos, spiral bound, $20; *Riesenschlangen aus aller Welt* by Zdenek Vogel, 1973, 102 pp., b&w photos, paperbound, in German, $32, reprint 1970 edition, 94 pp., b&w photos, drawings, range maps, paperbound, $20; *Reptiles and Amphibians of Australia* by Harold Cogger, 4th edition 1986, 688 pp., b&w and color photos, range maps, keys, hardbound, DJ, $48. All books are in excellent condition. Prices postpaid. William R. Turner, 7395 S. Downing Circle West, Littleton, CO 80l22, (303) 795-5128. E-mail: turnerbmrk@prodigy.net.

For sale: Brazilian rainbow boas—screaming red & orange babies, only five left, $125; "starburst" woma python—pick of the litter male, outstanding animal, $1250; 3½' female Argentine boa, $150; 4' striped male African rock python, $150; Pueblan milksnakes, c.b. '00, $35. All animals are captive born and are feeding on prekilled rodents. Mark Petros, Strictly Serpents, (847) 854-3259, E-mail: turbovixens1@prodigy.net.

For sale: Send SASE to CRC, P.O. Box 0731, Las Vegas NV 89125-0731 for brochures and list of species available. Limited bookings available for guided tours of herpetological collection sites in Nevada. Call/fax (702) 450-0065. URL http://www.herp.com/crc/ E-mail: crcsafetie@aol.com.

Tours: Adventure tours to Madagascar! Join **Bill Love** seeing and photographing fauna and flora, heavily herp-biased, across the world's least known mini-continent. Maximum fun & photo ops assured on every trip. Contact him at: BLUE CHAMELEON VENTURES, P.O. Box 643, Alva FL 33920. TEL: (941) 728-2390, FAX: (941) 728-3276, E-mail: blove@cyberstreet.com.

Tours: **Road-riding in Costa Rica!** Treat yourself to the trip of a lifetime! Learn about tropical herps, find them, photograph them, see where they live. **Greentracks, Inc.**, offers the best herpetological tours led by internationally acclaimed herpetologists and herpetoculturists. See the Amazon, visit cloud forests, experience the world's greatest rainforest, super sunsets and good company. Call (800) 9-MONKEY.

Wanted: big-headed turtles; mata mata turtles; Mexican giant mud turtles (*Staurotypus triporcatus*); exceptionally large common snappers (45 lbs. & up); large alligator snappers (over 90 lbs.); spectacled caiman from Trinidad, Tobago and Surinam; dwarf caiman; smooth-fronted caiman; albino turtles (except red-eared sliders). Walt Loose, (610) 926-6028, 9:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M. or after 11:30 P.M. Eastern Time.

Line ads in this publication are run free for CHS members—$2 per line for nonmembers. Any ad may be refused at the discretion of the Editor. Submit ads to: Michael Dloogatch, 6048 N. Lawndale Avenue, Chicago IL 60659, (773) 588-0728 evening telephone, (312) 782-2868 fax, E-mail: <MADadder0@aol.com>.

News and Announcements

NORTHERN ILLINOIS PRAIRIE WORKSHOP

The 12th Northern Illinois Prairie Workshop will take place Saturday, March 10, 7 A.M. to 5 P.M., at the College of DuPage, Student Resource Center, 425 22nd Street, Glen Ellyn, Illinois. The registration fee is $40 until March 2, $50 thereafter. The 20-minute workshops include: "Managing for Prairie with Reptiles and Amphibians in Mind," "Calling Frog Survey: The First Year Results," and "Evaluating the Effectiveness of Head Starting as a Conservation Tool for the Ornate Box Turtle, *Terrapene ornata*." For information on registration call (630) 942-3948.

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON THE PATHOLOGY OF REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

The 6th International Symposium on the Pathology of Reptiles and Amphibians will take place April 18–20, at the University of Minnesota, Earle Brown Continuing Education Center, Saint Paul, Minnesota. The registration fee is $240 until March 1, $275 thereafter. For more information visit <http://www.cbs.umn.edu/meetings/path/>.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

The next meeting of the Chicago Herpetological Society will be held at 7:30 P.M., Wednesday, February 28, at the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum, Cannon Drive and Fullerton Parkway, in Chicago. Our featured speaker will be **Gerry Salmon**, a herpetoculturist from Rhinebeck, New York. Gerry's topic will be "Herping in South Carolina — Then and Now."

At the March 28 meeting **Ron Humbert** and **Mike Redmer** will present an overview of native as well as exotic amphibians, starting with those found in your backyard and including some from as far away as the jungles of Borneo. Included will be a number of "before and after" photo pairs, showing larvae and their adult forms.

The regular monthly meetings of the Chicago Herpetological Society now take place at Chicago's newest museum — the **Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum**. This beautiful new building is at Fullerton Parkway and Cannon Drive, directly across Fullerton from the Lincoln Park Zoo. Meetings are held the last Wednesday of each month, from 7:30 P.M. through 9:30 P.M. Parking is free on Cannon Drive. A plethora of CTA buses stop nearby.

The Chicago Turtle Club

The next meeting of the Chicago Turtle Club will be Sunday, February 25, 1:00 – 3:30 P.M., at the North Park Village Nature Center, 5801 N. Pulaski, in Chicago. The topic will be "Turtles in Culture and Myth: A Tribute to the Turtle and Tortoise as Written throughout the Ages." Readings performed by members of the Chicago Turtle Club and friends. Meetings are informal; questions, children and animals are welcome. Parking is free. For more info call Lisa Koester, (773) 508-0034, or visit the CTC website: http://www.geocities.com/~chicagoturtle.

SERVICE AWARDS PRESENTED

Two exceptional CHS members were honored at the January 31 CHS meeting. **Don Wheeler**, creator of "The Adventures of Spot," was presented with the CHS Lifetime Service Award. This special award is given only infrequently to a person or persons chosen by the Awards Committee, subject to the approval of the president. **Char Haguewood** received the Presidential Service Award, presented each year to a person selected by the president as having been particularly helpful to the president or to the CHS Board.

DONATIONS TO THE DECEMBER 27 RAFFLE

The following is a listing of those businesses and individuals who generously donated items for our monthly raffle at the December 27 meeting. The donated items are shown in parentheses.

Sunshine Mealworms (cricket gift certificate); **Super Pet** (Hanging Gardens cage decor); **Hagen** (OrnamentAlls cholla shelter); **Emily & Will Forcade** (turtle calendar); **Randy Babb — Arizona Game and Fish Department** (Arizona rattlesnake poster); **Lori King** (lizard ornamental sculpture); **Fran Kostka—KFK Jewelry** (turtle necklace); **Charlotte Henkle** (ceramic heat element / light & fixture); **Ron & Dotty Humbert** (aquariums); **CHS** (T-shirts / herp puzzle).

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